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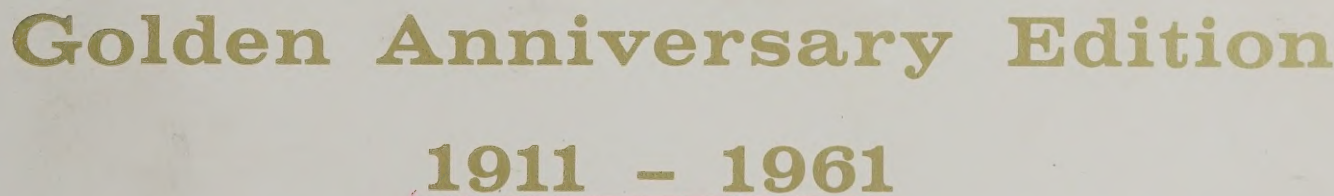
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# Mellette County

South Dakota

# Memories



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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Fred and Dessie Egleston, who homesteaded in Mellette County on the southwest quarter of Section 30, Township 42, Range 27, in what later became Cody Township.

. . . And to all the other Mellette County Homesteaders. They had the faith in the future of Mellette County, and the courage to come to the prairies of South Dakota, there to endure the hardships of pioneering, so they could build homes for themselves and their children.

. . . And to all the people who contributed material for this book.

Our purpose in compiling this book was to preserve these Mellette County Memories for future generations.

WINIFRED REUTTER, White River, S. D.

1275689



Egleston Homestead in 1913. Fred Egleston, Mrs. Fred Egleston (seated), Wesley on her lap, Winifred, beside her. Ben and Will Egleston and Roy Oster.

### A TRIBUTE TO MY PARENTS — MELLETTE COUNTY PIONEERS

They came out west, where the lonely coyote run,  
To build a home for themselves, a daughter and a baby son.  
Dad brought his team and a walking, breaking plow,  
His carpenter tools, some speckled hens, and a gentle Roany cow.  
Mother brought her trunk, full of quilts and calico clothes,  
Her butter bowl, a crockery churn and slips from a yellow rose.  
Blizzards and drouth, adventures like the rest . . .  
Of good times and bad times . . . shared with settlers of the west.  
Dakota homesteaders plowed and planted, now are gone . . .  
Their heritage of courage became ours to carry on!

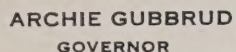
—D. T. C., Winifred Reutter, White River

(Dakota Territory Contest,  
received honorable mention)

Reprinted from Centennial Issue  
of "Pasque Petals," March 1961

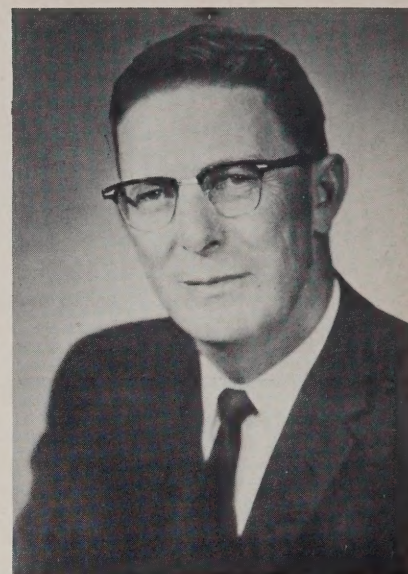
Copyright 1961 — Paul and/or Winifred Reutter, White River, S. D.





SOUTH DAKOTA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
PIERRE

April 11, 1961



Winifred Reutter  
White River, South Dakota

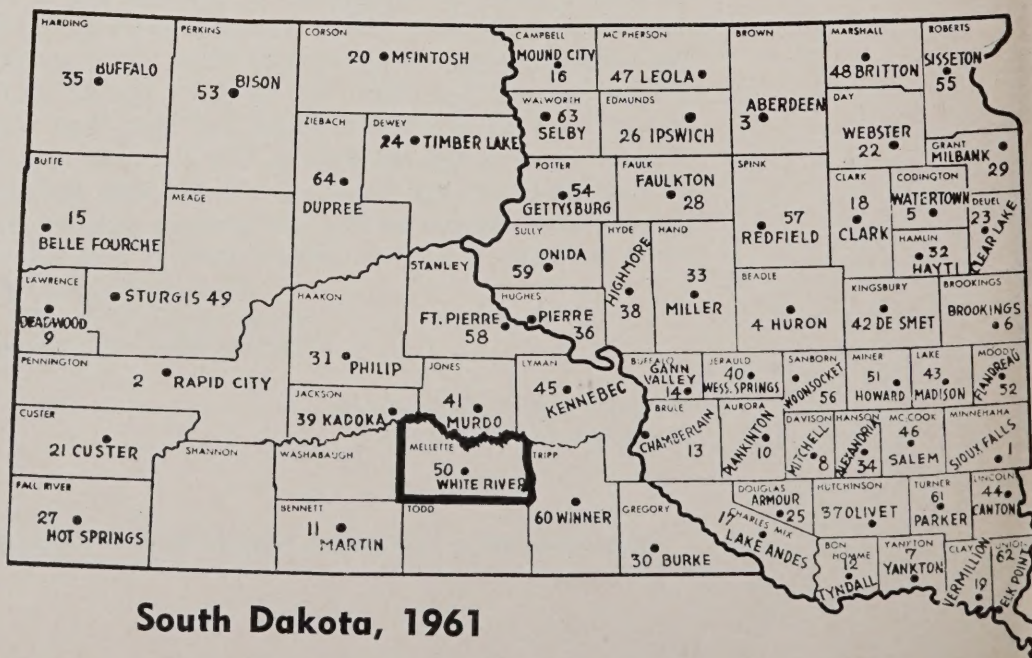
Dear friend:

Thank you for your letter of April 7 relative to your book of Pioneer Stories, soon to be published. Please accept my most sincere congratulations on this undertaking. It is with appreciation and interest that I enclose the glossy print you requested.

I am looking forward to seeing this publication. I'm sure it will be a historical service of value for both Mellette County and our state, and I am honored to be made a part of it.

Cordially,

Archie Gubbrud  
GOVERNOR



## South Dakota, 1961



Mellette Co., S. Dak.

The county of Mellette heretofore created shall be bounded as follows:

Beginning at a point on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Guide Meridian where the township line between townships 39 & 40 crosses the same, thence north along said 3<sup>rd</sup> Guide Meridian to the middle of the channel of the White River, thence west along the middle of the main channel of White Riv. to the west line of Rosebud Indian Reservation, thence south along the boundary line of the Rosebud Indian Reservation to the point where it intersects the line between townships 39 & 40, thence east along said line to the point of beginning

In effect upon passage and approval.

Approved March 2, 1911.

P. 138, Session Laws of 1911.

Rev. 1, 13, 14.

Boundary  
Changed, Jan<sup>13</sup>/14  
M.H.

Mellette County.  
Created 1909.  
Organized 1911.  
Formerly North  
Part of Meyer  
County.



The man for whom Mellette County was named. Last Governor of Dakota Territory, March 22 to November 2, 1889; first Governor of South Dakota, November 2, 1889 to January 3, 1893.





**FIRST 25 PERSONS TO FILE HOMESTEAD CLAIMS IN MELLETTE COUNTY.** They filed in the forenoon of April 15, 1912, at White River in the "map room" of the building that later became the Mellette County Courthouse. The first filers are in the second row, others are locators, friends, and others ready to file later. Lady in center (light coat) is Mary Kendall, holder of lucky number one. Lady at far left is Freda Gudath. Fourth from right is Frank Hakl, who furnished this picture.



At left:  
Miss Dorothy Slaughter and Miss Virginia Foster, who draw the winning numbers for Judge Witten, Mellette County opening, October 24, 1911.



Homestead Shack on No. 1, NE 15 41-26, drawn by Mary J. Kendall, Rapid City, S. D.



# First 100 Filers

Following is the list of the 100 first filers, as shown in The Mellette County News, Vol. 2, White River, Mellette County, S. Dak., Thursday, April 18, 1912, No. 5:

List of early filers, April 15, 1912.  
First Hundred Numbers:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| No. 1—Mary J. Kendall, Rapid City, S. D., NE 15 41-26.       | No. 35—J. M. Batman, Greenburg, Kans., SE 5 41-26.           | No. 70—W. M. McBride, Plankinton, S. D., N 8 42-27.      |
| No. 2—Frank D. Boyles, Gregory, S. D., NE 11 41-26.          | No. 36—Francis P. Gavin, Kansas City, Kans., NW 18 40-26.    | No. 71—J. Albin Johoson, Gregory, S. D., SW 1 41-25.     |
| No. 3—William Rothmeyer, Mohane, Mo., SW 5 41-26.            | No. 37—Benie Heney, Wood, S. D., NW 14 40-27.                | No. 72—G. W. Sawyer, Curtiss, Nebr., SE 21 41-27.        |
| No. 4—Solon D. Johnson, Keller-ville, Ill., NW 8 41-26.      | No. 38—William B. Stewart, Jr., Omaha, Nebr., NE 8 41-26.    | No. 73—Roy F. Bauleke, DeSuer, Minn., SW 23 41-25.       |
| No. 5—Chas. W. Cordes, Rapid City, S. D., SW 19 40-29.       | No. 39—William H. Hedrick, Carter, S. D., SW 18 40-26.       | No. 74—L. E. Walters, George, Ia., SE 27 41-25.          |
| No. 6—Richard O'Malley, O'Neill, Nebr., SW 14 40-2.          | No. 40—Edward H. Albers, Burwell, Nebr., SE 35 40-26.        | No. 76—W. H. Riley, Spearfish, S. D., SW 10 42-27.       |
| No. 7—Leonard W. Ellmaker, Omaha, Nebr., NE 5 41-26.         | No. 41—Harvey C. Lear, Kansas City, Kans., NW 22 40-27.      | No. 78—David Lemonnier, Osmond, Nebr., NE 31 42-27.      |
| No. 8—George Klaban, Newton, Kans., SE 14 41-26.             | No. 43—Ray Rankin, Wood, S. D., NE 18 40-26.                 | No. 79—Nels Peterson, Valparaiso, Nebr., NE 7 42-27.     |
| No. 9—Clement J. Daegling, Chicago, Ill., NE 2 41-26.        | No. 44—Mrs. Ida L. Hughes, Naper, Nebr., NE 12 41-26.        | No. 80—Andy Pearson, Mead, Nebr., NE 10 40-27.           |
| No. 10—Frieda Gudath, Gregory, S. D., SE 23 41-26.           | No. 45—W. D. Ward, Skidmore, Mo., SW 27 40-27.               | No. 81—William E. Collins, Chicago, Ill., SE 19 41-27.   |
| No. 11—Henry F. Chamberlain, Clifton, S. D., NE 23 41-26.    | No. 49—Al P. Smith, Grabill, Ind., NE 22 41-28.              | No. 82—Willis A. Wesner, Avant, Okla., NW 32 42-25.      |
| No. 12—Emma Auerswald, Herrick, S. D., NE 34 41-25.          | No. 50—August N. Klug, Caledonia, Minn., SE 2 41-26.         | No. 83—R. E. Whipple, Lehigh, Ia., SW 27 41-25.          |
| No. 13—J. Holm, Colome, S. D., NE 7 40-26.                   | No. 51—Robert E. Anderson, Centerville, S. D., NE 34 40-27.  | No. 84—Albert R. Walford, Ronney, W. Va., NE 11 41-28.   |
| No. 14—L. W. Splichal, Dodge, Nebr., NE 34 41-26.            | No. 52—J. Cey Collins, Winner, S. D., SW 2 41-27.            | No. 86—Frank S. Justman, Plankinton, S. D., SW 27 42-28. |
| No. 16—Edward Dishaw, North Loup, Nebr., NE 26 41-25.        | No. 53—C. J. Schunter, Grand Mound, Ia., NW 29 42-27.        | No. 87—Hans O. Satree, Newman Grove, Nebr., NW 9 42-25.  |
| No. 17—Michael J. McGarr, Auburn, N. Y., NW 4 41-29.         | No. 55—Margaret Fulton, Rapid City, S. D., SW 31 42-27.      | No. 88—Elmer J. Shenefield, Malvern, Ia., SE 18 42-27.   |
| No. 19—Frank Bleha, Gann Valley, S. D., SW 13 41-26.         | No. 56—J. P. Norup, Elba, Nebr., NE 15 40-27.                | No. 89—John A. Engelhaupt, Spencer, Nebr., NE 24 40-27.  |
| No. 20—Will Bett Armstrong, Ottumwa, Iowa, NW 14 41-26.      | No. 57—James Quigley, Carroll, Iowa, SE 32 42-27.            | No. 90—E. L. Peoples, Bonesteel, S. D., NW 7 40-27.      |
| No. 21—Frank Hakl, Tyndall, S. D., NE 14 41-26.              | No. 58—Albert Nauman, Dallas, S. D., SE 1 40-27.             | No. 92—Jonathan Walker, Boscabs, Wisc., NE 25 40-28.     |
| No. 22—Josiah L. Scull, Lincoln, Nebr., NE 9 40-26.          | No. 59—Merle M. Kline, Colon, Nebr., NW 10 40-26.            | No. 93—John C. Burne, Lewisville, Ill., SW 12 42-28.     |
| No. 23—Nick A. Fandell, Metamora, Ill., 1 40-27.             | No. 60—C. M. Babcock, Redfield, S. D., SW . . . (incomplete) | No. 94—Homer Thompson, Scotland, S. D., SW 29 40-26.     |
| No. 24—Frank S. Richardson, Sioux Falls, S. D., SW 14 41-26. | No. 61—John Brennan, Sioux City, Iowa, SE 29 40-26.          | No. 95—Theodore Johnson, Onawa, Iowa, SE 25 42-29.       |
| No. 25—Harry Atwood, Council Bluffs, Iowa, NE 32 42-27.      | No. 62—Erik Erikson, Omaha, Nebr., SW 14 40-27.              | No. 96—John H. Murphy, Ashland, Wisc., NW 12 41-28.      |
| No. 26—Percy C. Werthwein, Chester, Iowa, NW 12 41-26.       | No. 63—Gus Yunker, Elgin, Nebr., SW 9 42-26.                 | No. 97—Louis Rabe, Geddes, S. D., SE 10 40-26.           |
| No. 27—Jerry G. Ryan, Centerville, Iowa, SW 27 40-26.        | No. 64—O. B. Dahlgren, Dell Rapids, S. D., SE 9 40-27.       | No. 98—Thomas L. Dawson, Stewart, Minn., NW 17 40-.....  |
| No. 31—W. J. Boland, Platte, S. D., SW 7 40-26.              | No. 65—Alma Faulstick, Norfolk, Nebr., NE 32 40-27.          | No. 99—Charles E. Freman, Perkins, Okla., SW 32 42-25.   |
| No. 32—Hiram L. Acker, Omaha, Nebr., SW 12 40-27.            | No. 66—H. L. Swanson, Marengo, Iowa, SE 21 40-27.            | No. 100—Carl Stone, White Lake, S. D., NE 32 40-26.      |
| No. 33—George L. Stahl, River Falls, Wisc., SW 32 40-26.     | No. 67—Forest E. Larson, Palmyra, Nebr., NW 28 42-26.        |  |
| No. 34—Henry Muth, Akron, Ohio, SE 30 40-26.                 | No. 68—Jake Janson, Kimball, S. D., NW ..... 40-27.          |  |
|  | No. 69—George B. Moore, Leon, Ia., SW ..... 40-27.           |  |

\* \* \*

## NOTE:

Names are spelled according to newspaper.



Joanna Nolan,  
Mellette County  
Homesteader,  
Sowing Oats in  
1913.



You should inform the contractor, or person performing service for him, of this application, and require him to execute the appended certificate as to the practicability of supplying the proposed office with mail.  
Very respectfully,



*J. H. Binstow*  
Fourth Assistant Postmaster General.

To Mr. \_\_\_\_\_  
care of the Postmaster of \_\_\_\_\_, who will please forward to him.

### STATEMENT.

The proposed office to be called

*Redwing*

 **Notice directions for selecting post office names on next page.** 

It will be situated in the *NE* quarter of Section *3* Township *41* (North or South),  
Range *29* (East or West), \_\_\_\_\_, in the County of *Malheur*, State of *Idaho*.

It will be on or near route No. \_\_\_\_\_, being the route from \_\_\_\_\_  
to \_\_\_\_\_, on which the mail is now carried \_\_\_\_\_ times per week.

Will it be directly on this route?—Ans. \_\_\_\_\_

If not, how much would its supply on this route increase the distance necessarily traveled by the carrier in going once over the route? \_\_\_\_\_

If not on any route, is a "Special Office" wanted?—Ans. *Yes* To be supplied from *Rosebud*

The name of the nearest office to the proposed one, on one side, is *Weston*, *Idaho*, its distance is *Nineteen* miles in a *North 14 mi E 5 mi* direction from the proposed office.

The name of the nearest office, on the other side, is *Rosebud*, *Idaho*, its distance is *Twenty seven* miles in a *South 22 mi W 5 mi* direction from the proposed office.

The name of the other nearest office to the proposed one is *Good*, *Idaho*, its distance by the most direct road is *Twenty one* miles in a \_\_\_\_\_ direction from the proposed office.

The name of the most prominent river near it is *Little White or S Fork of White River*

The name of the nearest creek is *Pine*

The proposed office will be *1/8* miles from said river, on the *East* side of it, and will be *1* mile from said nearest creek, on the *East* side of it.

The name of the nearest railroad is *Chicago Milwaukie & St Paul*

If on the line of or near a railroad, on which side will the office be located; how far from the track; and what is, or was, the name of the station?—Ans. *30 miles south*

Give the population to be supplied by the proposed office.—Ans. *About five hundred & fifty*

If it be a village, state the number of inhabitants.—Ans. *About one hundred*

A diagram, or sketch from a map, showing the position of the proposed new office, with neighboring river or creek, roads, and other post offices, towns, or villages near it, will be useful, and is therefore desired.

ALL WHICH I CERTIFY to be correct and true, according to the best of my knowledge and belief, this *9th* day of *January*, 1901.

(Sign full name.) *Jesse Brown*, Proposed P. M.

I CERTIFY that I have examined the foregoing statement, and that it is correct and true, to the best of my knowledge and belief.  
(This must be signed by Postmaster at nearest office.)

Postmaster at

*J. E. Ramhouser*  
*Weston, Idaho*  
(OVER.)

\*At a "special office" the postmaster is authorized to employ a carrier to supply the office as often as practicable, for a sum not exceeding two-thirds of the postmaster's compensation.

Applications for post offices should be accompanied by petitions of citizens interested





Trading Post run by Mr. Brown, father of Jesse Brown. This was located on the river. Post Office; Red Wing, located in it.



Art Siegmund  
Postmaster at White River  
1961

## Ghost Post Offices Of Mellette County

By Winifred Reutter

The material for this article was gathered from several sources. The legal descriptions are copied from a 1911 homesteaders map and from photographic copies of postal transfers and appointments obtained from the Postal Department in Washington, D.C. Postmasters' names and appointment dates were also copied from material sent to me by the National Archives and Records in Washington, D.C., and is used here with their permission.

Some of the former Mellette County postmasters that I talked to told me that the dates given here vary, in some instances, with the exact dates they received their postal appointments. However, anyone who has ever had any experience in getting information through all the offices and red tape necessary to conduct the vast business at Washington, D.C., can understand the delays. In fact, it has taken over eight months of correspondence for me to compile this data from them.

I noticed that several of the homesteaders applied for a Post Office, sometimes as long as three or four months before their petitions were granted. Many of these little post offices had been named by the homesteaders and became well-known by that name, only to have the Government choose a different name for them. For instance, Apex, so called by the homesteaders, was officially named Knodell later on by the Postal Department. All of this adds up to a lot of confusion for the historians that are writing up this part of Mellette County history.

In the homesteading days, when transportation was by team and wagon, the neighbor going to town usually brought back mail and groceries for his immediate neighbors. That is how these little grocery

stores and post office units got started. With the coming of the automobile and better roads, everyone was able to go to the larger towns for their supplies and mail routes were established. Thus, 16 of these 18 early Mellette County post offices became ghosts who faded away into the mists of time. Five towns remain today, 1961, with Government Post Offices: Cedarbutte, Mosher, Norris, White River, and Wood.

\* \* \*

List of discontinued Post Offices in Mellette County with names of Postmasters and other information, according to the postal records on file in Washington, D.C.:

1. Apex: SW 20 41-30 (See Knodell).
2. Bad Nation: SE 4 42-25. James A. Peacock, April 1, 1916 (Name changed from Runningville, July 1, 1938.) Discontinued Oct. 31, 1942. Mail to Wood.
3. Berkley: SE 34 41-27. Colonel B. Holland, May 26, 1913. Discontinued Jan. 15, 1916. Mail to Wood.
4. Brave: SE 26 43-26. Joseph A. Brave, Sept. 12, 1922. Mrs. Alice Hare, Possession, Sept. 6, 1930. Mrs. Alice Hare, Acting P.M., Oct. 7, 1930. Mrs. Alice Hare, Appointed Oct. 17, 1930. Discontinued March 30, 1935. Mail to Runningville.
5. Chilton: NW 15 40-26. Silas H. Moore, May 21, 1913. Discontinued May 31, 1914. Mail to Carter.
6. Cody: SE 30 42-27. Cody F. Sinning, May 21, 1913. Discontinued Nov. 23, 1923, effective Dec. 15, 1923. Mail to White River.
7. Farley: NE 19 44-31. Nell C. Farley, June 27, 1912. Moved to SE 22 44-32. Lottie L. Bass, Feb. 11, 1916. Discontinued Oct. 16, 1918, effective Oct. 31, 1918. Mail to Belvidere.

8. Gate Way: NE 30 40-25. (First called Gate City by homesteaders.) Sylvanus V. Shelvin, May 8, 1912. Discontinued May 31, 1914. Mail to Carter.

9. Jorgenson: NW 18 43-31. Applied for Jan. 22, 1913. Jubal V. Jorgenson, May 21, 1913. Discontinued Dec. 15, 1913.

10. Kary: SW 14 40-32. Mrs. Cordelia Kary, April 28, 1925. Mrs. Mary W. Kary, Aug. 30, 1926. Mrs. Cordelia Kary, Oct. 5, 1938. Discontinued June 30, 1946. Mail to Parmelee.

11. Knodell: SW 20 41-30 (see Apex). Mrs. Elizabeth Knodell, Feb. 17, 1919. Moved to NE 25 41-31. Miss Hazel L. Palmateer, Oct. 31, 1922. Mrs. Rose Butterfield, Possession Dec. 15, 1923. Mrs. Rose Butterfield, Acting, Dec. 22, 1923. Mrs. Rose Butterfield, Appointed Feb. 6, 1924. Mrs. John Pederson, Possession June 1, 1926. Mrs. John Pederson, Acting, June 10, 1926. Moved to SW 4 41-31. Mrs. Leona L. Counts, Possession July 1, 1926. Mrs. Leona L. Counts, Acting, July 12, 1926. Mrs. Leona L. Counts, Appointed, Aug. 25, 1926. Discontinued Sept. 19, 1928; effective Oct. 15, 1928. Mail to Cedarbutte.

12. Neville: NE 2 40-29 (first called McCauley by homesteaders). Ellis M. McCauley, June 28, 1915. Mrs. O. H. Stevens, Possession April 22, 1921. Mrs. O. H. Stevens, Acting, May 3, 1921. Moved to NE 10 40-29. Mrs. Delia Delany, Feb. 8, 1922. Discontinued Dec. 19, 1925; effective Dec. 31, 1925. Mail to White River.

13. Red Wing: SE 3 41-29. Applied for Jan. 9, 1911. Jesse Brown, Feb. 17, 1911. Moved to SW 35 42-29. Name changed to White River, June 5, 1911.

14. Ringthunder: SW 22 40-30. Mrs. Dollie E. Trotter, June 28, 1923. Moved to NW 23 40-30. Mrs. Harlan Clayton, Possession, May 7, 1924.

(Continued)



## Ghost Post Offices Of Mellette County

Mrs. Harlan Clayton, Acting, June 14, 1924. Mrs. Amelia Clayton, Aug. 14, 1924. Discontinued May 23, 1929; effective May 31, 1929. Mail to White River.

15. Runningville: SE 4 42-25. Jas. Peacock, Feb. 5, 1916. Name changed to Bad Nation, July 1, 1938.

16. Schamber: NE 19 44-31. Peter Schamber, July 22, 1918. Mrs. Nellie L. Anderson, April 18, 1922. Mrs. Lizzie Lee, Oct. 25, 1923. Moved to SE 25 44-31. Mrs. Etta V. Leek, Jan. 31, 1927. Discontinued June 30, 1934. Mail to Stamford.

17. Texam: E½ 34 43-30. Ida E. Witherow, May 21, 1913. Moved to SE 28 43-30. Mary A. Shouldis, Possession, March 22, 1921. Mary A. Shouldis, Acting, April 18, 1921. Mary A. Shouldis, Oct. 15, 1921. Discontinued July 31, 1931. Mail to White River.

18. Wood: NE 36 41-27 (Wood Trading Post), (On Butte Creek, then Meyer County). Dabney G. Miller, (Established) Feb. 23, 1906. (Moved 600 yards north to Wood Townsite, April 23, 1911.) See Wood, in 1961 Post Office list.

Ghost Townsites of Mellette County surveyed, platted and recorded, but never developed — no records of any Post Offices being established:

Danville: SW 28 40-32. Nine blocks, 1909.

Meyer: SE 30 40-25. Fourteen

blocks recorded, June 14, 1909.

Ogallalla: E 25 40-32. Plans never completed, 1911.

Record of active Post Offices of Mellette County in 1961:

1. Cedarbutte: NW 26 42-32. Jesse W. Beckwith, Sept. 30, 1915. Harriet E. Beckwith, May 25, 1916. Mrs. Bertha Beard, July 25, 1923. Mrs. Pearl Jorgensen, Dec. 14, 1925. John Stark-johann, April 6, 1928. Chadwick N. Addison, June 1, 1939. Mrs. Edith M. Foster, Jan. 31, 1940. Moved to NW 33 42-31. Miss Metha L. Fuerst, April 23, 1942. Joseph Fuerst, July 30, 1943. Roy W. Fuerst, April 21, 1950, (still Postmaster, 1961).

2. Mosher: SE 5 40-25. (First proposed townsite called Little Crow, east of there.) George W. Sawyer, Possession, July 16, 1930. George W. Sawyer, Appointed, Aug. 4, 1930. Mrs. Ruth Richter, Feb. 1, 1940. Mrs. Ada L. Richter, Dec. 4, 1941. Marcus H. Weed, May 2, 1943. Shirley Ann Meyers, June 11, 1946. Don A. Sinclair, Oct. 16, 1948 (still Postmaster, 1961).

3. Norris: Exact first location unknown. Paul H. Putnam (then in Washabaugh County), 1909. Reuben Quick Bear (Washabaugh County), May 20, 1911. Roy Brazell (Mellette County), 1913-14. Paul H. Putnam, 1915. Requested move to SE 3 40-33, Feb. 27, 1915. Isaac D. Kephart, Nov. 26, 1915. Mrs. Edith Martin, Sept. 7, 1921. Harry J. Wallace, Acting, July 11, 1928. Harry J. Wallace, Sept. 29, 1928. Bertha Beard, July 10, 1933. Mrs. Ethel E. Miller, Aug.

18, 1935. Robert G. Totten, Oct. 31, 1953 (still Postmaster, 1961).

4. White River (County Seat of Mellette County): SW 35 42-29. (Moved from Red Wing; see Ghost Post Office list.) Jesse Brown, June 5, 1911. A. Rae Dendy, Nov. 5, 1914. A. Rae Dendy, Oct. 1, 1917. A. Rae Dendy, June 31, 1918. Alfred R. Dendy, April 10, 1922. Don E. Terpin, May 19, 1926. John E. Toft, July 3, 1926. Alva M. Kell, June 4, 1928. Chas. S. Hight, March 2, 1929. Arthur Siegmund, July 7, 1933 (still Postmaster, 1961).

5. Wood: E½ SW¼ and W½ SE¼ 25 41-27. (First in Meyer County; see Ghost Post Offices.) Established on Butte Creek, NE 36 41-27, Feb. 23, 1906. Dabney G. Miller, Appointed March 19, 1906. (Moved 600 yards north to Wood Townsite, April 24, 1911.) Robert P. Carter (Mellette County), Feb. 19, 1912. Ralph S. Williams, Jan. 12, 1915. Dabney G. Miller, May 15, 1916. George W. Sawyer, Dec. 30, 1918. Merrill Kaufman, Possession, Sept. 5, 1925. Merrill Kaufman, Acting, Sept. 12, 1925. Merrill Kaufman, Appointed Nov. 10, 1925. Merrill Kaufman, July 1, 1930. Merrill Kaufman, Jan. 7, 1931. Edd A. Sinkler, Oct. 10, 1935 (still Postmaster, 1961).

According to this information, compiled from the records at Washington, D. C., Post Offices remaining in Mellette County rank in age as follows: Wood, 1906; Norris, 1909; White River, 1911; Cedarbutte, 1915; and Mosher, 1930.

### Mellette County To Be Organized May 25th, 1911

The election for the organization of Mellette county, which will be held May 25th, promises to develop a pretty lively campaign. The main contest will be for the county seat. Wood, in the south part of the county, has been the only town, but a new town to be called White River has been platted and the residents of that vicinity are asking the voters to locate the capital of the county there because it is more nearly the geographical center of the county as well as the center of population. Both towns will make a thorough canvas during the next month. There will also be a number of candidates out for some of the offices and the indications are that there will be some close contests. Red Wing is a new postoffice established in Mellette county last week, Jesse Brown having received the commission as postmaster on the 20th. The office will be located at Brown & Son's store on Little White river. On the flat a short distance from the river, Jackson Bros., of Dallas, have platted a townsite which they call White River and which will be one of the live candidates for county seat at the coming election. The name of the postoffice is Red Wing but some of the old settlers insist on calling the town, White River.

(Taken from Murdo Coyote files of April, 1911.)

## Pioneer Stories

The Pioneer Stories on the following pages were most of them written by the pioneers themselves, and edited by me (that means I took your errors out and put mine in!). If you enjoy reading these stories, why not tell the writers so? Names and 1961 addresses available upon request. Stories follow in alphabetical order, by family name.

—WINIFRED REUTTER

For Map of Mellette County, and further history, see back pages of book.



# The Adrian Story

By Bess Adrian

Earl Adrian, only son of Mary and Deidrich Adrian, was born at Parker, S. D., July 3, 1898. He had one sister, Helen, a year older. When he was but a few years old, his folks moved to Corsica, S. D., where they operated a hotel until 1910. Then a number of families from around Corsica decided to settle in Tripp County close to the Dorian Buttes, west of Clearfield. Dallas, S. D., the end of the railroad at that time, was a booming land office town. D. L. Adrian, William Seiser, Tony Raben and T. J. Harrington had gone ahead to Dallas, purchased lumber for their houses and freighted it across country to their new homes. Earl still has a birthday card that D. L. Adrian wrote to his wife, March 1, 1910, telling her that the river had broken up, therefore she would have to go around by Sioux City.

In due time, the new homes were built and the families established. Their main fuel at first was twisted hay and cow chips. By the fall of 1910, a sod school house was built. Miss Kavanaugh was one of the first teachers. Most terms were three months, receiving thirty-five dollars per month. After the school bought an organ they had fun dancing during the noon and recess periods and on Saturday nights. Teachers were hard to get because very few were qualified. When they didn't have school close to his home, Earl walked three miles southeast to the Ed Johnson school.

Later he went to Ward's Academy near Platte, S. D. He worked for ten cents per hour before and after school, cleaning barns and hauling hay, to help pay for his education. Rev. Camfield, who managed the school, was very good. He tried to help less fortunate boys get an education. Toward spring, Earl got so homesick that he and the two Rowe boys, Charles and Frank, left school, crossing the Missouri River in a row boat while the river was still full of floating ice. This was at Snake Creek crossing. In later years, when Frank Rowe (now living close to Winner, S. D.) had a son going to high school and Earl Adrian had sons playing in the same football team, they would reminisce about their days at Ward's Academy and their row boat trip across the Missouri River. Charles Rowe lost his life in World War I.

Earl's cowboy days started when he hired out to John Neiss as a ranch hand. Neiss owned some very good horses. Some were thoroughbred Percherons; these had to be broken to work, and some were wild horses. These were broken to be sold on purchase orders at the Rosebud Indian Agency. The ranch was located in eastern Todd County so Earl was able to ride home often, to visit his mother who was in poor health. He also worked for Dave Archer and Tom Arnold. Dave had a ranch in western Tripp County. Sometimes in the winter, when the snow was deep, they would hitch two unbroken horses to a bobsled. Tipping over in the snow wasn't as painful as on the hard ground, and they had many exciting experiences together.

On September 12, 1919, Earl's mother passed away. His sister Helen had married Clark Culver the year before. His father was working for the International Harvester Company out of Winner, so from then on until he married in 1928, Earl's home was wherever he hung his hat.

For four years he worked for Oscar Haish, north of Winner, S. D. He came up into Mellette County to get stock. Haish owned a ranch on the Little and Big White

Rivers. It was during that time he met Sam Yellow Robe from Westover, S. D. He told Sam of his desire to buy some land and to start a ranch of his own. The two things he had especially wanted it to have were plenty of water and wood. Sam promised to keep on the lookout for a quarter of that kind.

Some of Earl's early memories of Mellette County are amusing. He recalls the "Hay Palace" at Wood. It was made of baled hay and was arranged with bales of straw intermingled to make a design. Each year they would have a fair and a big celebration. One time when Earl had been searching for stray cattle for Haish, he found some close to Wood. It was during the fair time and the year they had the hay palace so he decided to wait over and attend the dance for a while. Later he felt he should drive the cattle on, so started out. Two of the steers had given him a lot of trouble so he had tied them together by their horns. As he was going down a section line southeast of Wood, a terrific lightning storm broke loose. The lightning was terribly close. Sparks kept shooting across from the horns of those two steers and balls of fire followed down on the barbed wire fence. Luckily, neither Earl nor the steers were hit but things were pretty exciting around there for a while.

One time he was driving a herd of horses from Mellette County. His saddle horse was about played out by the time he got to Bill Lynass's place. Bill was out putting up hay but when Earl asked if he could use his corral to catch a fresh horse, Bill willingly quit to help. Earl chose a grey horse because he thought it looked like it had been ridden. Lynass tried to discourage him from picking that one but the grey was caught. The corral was eight foot high and it was a good thing, as that horse tried everything after Earl got on him. Finally, when the gate was opened, Earl continued to ride him and use him for the next twelve miles. Later that horse held the number two place as the second best bucking horse in South Dakota. He was used for many years at the Frontier Days in White River and his name was Red Wing.

Boyd O'Brien tells another story of Earl driving cattle to the Haish ranch on the Big White. It was in the later part of February, very wet and cold. They were moving four hundred head of good cows. Earl had developed a bad cold from sleeping out in the open under a tarp. He had continued driving until he was practically unconscious when he arrived at the O'Brien home. Mr. and Mrs. Henderson of Westover took him to Murdo to the hospital where it was learned that he had a severe case of pneumonia.

Shortly after that he went to Lead to work in the Homestake Mine. It was while he was there that Sam Yellow Robe wrote to him, saying that the quarter of land that had been the headquarters for the HE ranch was being offered in the Indian land sale at Rosebud. Earl sent in a bid of \$1,610.00 and was successful in getting it. It is the SW 24 40-31. It had a house and barn that had been built earlier by the Government. It is still the headquarters for the Adrian ranch.

Working in a mine was not very satisfactory for a man that was used to the open range. Earl only worked there a little over a year, then went to Keya Paha and was foreman for Charlie Benedict, a cattle feeder from Chicago. In January, 1924, he went to Prescott, Ariz., where he worked in a Government Hospital as an orderly and on the guard force.





Earl Adrian Ranch. X in dam marks watering spot of old HE Cattle Company.

Next he went to Borger, Texas. That was just when the oil boom was on in that country. There were no roads and the streets of Borger were filled with deep ruts. Earl still has a picture of a truck stuck in the mud on the main street. In 1947 when he and his wife traveled through Borger it was hard to realize that the paved streets of the town were the same streets of mud he had seen in 1926.

Earl returned to Winner in the summer of 1926 and helped his father buy cattle for a while. Later he worked for the Harding Cream Company, Clearfield, S. D. He also bought poultry and hides. During that winter, the farmers around Clearfield decided to have rabbit hunts on Sunday afternoons. They would kill hundreds of rabbits in one drive. The two bidders for the dead rabbits were Earl Adrian and W. H. Sturges of Winner, S. D. Earl was generally successful and got them for thirteen cents apiece. He hired them skinned for 5 or 6 cents and sold the hides to a firm in Denver, Colo.

It was while he was working at Clearfield that he met his future wife, Bess Angel. She was teaching the Churchside school, about one and one-half miles northwest of Clearfield. They were married June 11, 1928, at Bess's home at Spencer, Nebr. Their attendants were her best friend, Louise Whiting, and her cousin, Patrick Langan. The only honeymoon they took was trying to get back to Clearfield through muddy roads from Spencer. Much of highway 18 wasn't even graveled at that time and the gumbo hills north of Spencer will always be remembered.

During the next five years Earl and Bess both stayed on the payrolls, trying to pay for three more quarters of land and get a herd of cattle started.

Their daughter, Helen Marie, was born in 1929. For the next three years Bess taught the Keya Paha school and Earl continued to work for the Harding Cream Company.

The Adrians moved to Mellette County in March, 1933. Earl and his hired man batched until school was out. Adrians had high hopes in their new home. They planted five bushels of potatoes besides a field of corn and rye. That was the first year of the beetles. They came in all colors and sizes, and all were hungry. All pests do better in dry weather and even that was in their favor as it didn't rain all summer. A milk cow couldn't even be kept because the pastures were so bare.

Dale McCumber was our mail man, delivering the

mail three times a week; shortly afterwards it came every day.

In October our son, Robert, was born. Mrs. Clyde Otterman assisted a doctor from Rosebud. Then Mrs. Leonard Storms took care of mother and baby; she came from Clearfield.

That fall we traded our car for a team of horses as we didn't have money to buy gas and oil. Earl bought a load of wheat from Ferdinand Littau and took it to the mill at Mission, S. D., to be ground into flour. We got twenty-nine sacks of flour and several small sacks of breakfast food.

Throughout that year we went to the little Catholic church, with team and wagon, down south about four miles on Cutmeat Creek. There had been an Indian Day School there but all traces of it were gone.

Many people roasted wheat and ground it for coffee. We had no feed for our chickens. The only grain that was available was given for W.P.A. work. In January, Earl asked if they would allow him to work enough to get grain for the chickens. He was granted permission and from then on, he had to get up at four A.M., harness his horses and drive twelve miles to a Government dam that was being built in what is now Harold Krogman's pasture. Fred McKennett was foreman of the project. Many men were working there and they used four horse teams on fresnos.

Zona Rajewich was teaching our school that year. Often she walked five miles to and from school. Her son, Joe Jr., was five weeks old when school started. Surprise Valley Township had four schools at that time. The main community entertainment was card parties and dances in the school houses.

The spring of 1934 was hot and dry and we had lots of grasshoppers and beetles.

Our brother-in-law, Leo Fuhrer, drowned in the power dam at Spencer, Nebr., during the month of May. He left Bess's sister, Rose, with two small children to support. That fall she came up and taught the Deutsch School. Earl traded for a small shack which he and Clyde Otterman moved into the school yard. He paid for the shack with our turkey gobbler, a sack of flour, a couple wagon wheels and five dollars.

Water for cattle had been scarce throughout the summer. Clyde Otterman and Earl used a four-horse fresno to dig out the old spring that had always had water in former years. Also we dug a well by the house that never went dry. Mrs. Palmateer and son, Lloyd, were trying to keep their herd of cattle but the wells in their pastures were drying up. Finally, they hired Earl to summer four hundred head of cattle for them. He went up and helped drive them down. By the time they got within a quarter of a mile of the spring, they broke into a dead run and came running and bellowing the rest of the way. That only slackened their thirst at the spring so they were driven up by the well where we had four tanks full of water. The windmill went day and night. That was the two things we had plenty of, wind and dust!

The Government bought cattle that summer and fall. A cow and a calf brought only twenty dollars but that was more than they brought on the market. Many ranchers and farmers had them mortgaged anyhow, for more than they were worth. They issued most of the cattle that were sold at Parmelee, back to the Indians for food. They were branded E.R.A., which meant Emergency Relief Administration. There was a standing joke



that some of the Indians must have thought it meant "Eat Right Away."

In the fall, the W.P.A. would put up thistles for anyone who wanted them to. Many of us bought them and some of the farmers just turned their stock out to them. All the fields that had been farmed had some thistles on them. That winter we sent our cows down to Laurel, Nebr., with Ray Eveleth, who had dealt for winter feed down there. We gave one dollar per head per month for them. We had to bring them home about April first of 1935. They were real thin because of the severe winter in Nebraska. That spring it was hard to get a cow to claim her calf. We had a heavy wet snow April 10, 1935. It was about a foot deep on the level and was real wet. The coyotes were so bad; they would take calves right out of the stockyard while the cows were all around there.

Earl had a job as feed loan inspector in the fall of 1934 and was over around Huron and up in the Black Hills most of the winter. Hershel Nelson worked at our ranch, gathering wood and caring for our calves.

After the snow melted in 1935, our range grew the most beautiful crop of western wheat grass. The hill-sides and valleys were covered just like a great wheat field. We raised a good crop of milo and a small field produced 100 bushels of wheat. Turkeys were still a good price. We sold over \$400.00 worth that fall and kept 100 hens for the next year. Our hope was to raise enough turkeys the next year to buy a power washing machine and a radio. In July of 1935 our son, Donald Dean, was born.

Rudolph and Joe Petr cut our wheat and rye. Earl hired boys to help hay and they kept two mowers going throughout the late summer and fall, cutting hay and bunching it. They hauled it in with hay racks and used slings to pull it onto the stack. Dwight Sharp and Milton Mueller were hauling from the flat south of Clarence Krogman's. The flat was a prairie dog town. They found rattlesnakes had crawled under almost every shock of hay. On that flat they killed sixty-five snakes and piled them up. That had been known as a rattlesnake den when Holders lived there. Their son came home one day in the fall and reported that he had seen a snake about six inches around. When the men went up there to see it, they found that it was a bunch of little snakes wrapped around one another. They killed over 300 snakes there that afternoon. For years Earl and I would go out on that flat late in the fall, if it was a warm, balmy day, and look around the tops of the prairie dog holes. The snakes would crawl up to sun themselves. We killed dozens of them and Clarence Krogman killed a good many. Finally, a few years later, when we were able to get the Interior Department interested in poisoning prairie dogs, Earl and his sons took a road blade over there and filled up most of the holes by leveling the ground.

There was more of a demand for cattle in 1935 because very few of the poor ones sold in 1934 went to market. We sold three steers (Earl had bought them the winter before for five dollars apiece) for \$49.50 per head in July. That summer we were forced to buy two more quarters of land from the county if we wanted to keep our ranch together. They were just northwest of our house.

The winter of 1935 was open, with very little snow, and there wasn't any rain in the spring, so the hundred bushels of wheat we had planted didn't even come up. There were lots of grasshoppers. Earl went to White

River one day and over by the Twin Buttes near Fred McKennett's it looked like the ground was moving. It was a whole army of Mormon crickets. They were huge, brownish crickets that crawled along but almost always kept moving southwest, only stopping long enough to eat and then crawled on but never changed their general direction. The men in White River said that when they came to the Little White River they just jumped right in. The current would sweep them down stream quite a ways, but most of them seemed to survive and then crawled out down stream to continue on their journey. When they got here our turkeys were afraid of them and wouldn't eat them, even though they were used to eating thousands of grasshoppers. These Mormon crickets lasted only a few weeks, then they were all gone and we haven't been troubled with them since.

That is the spring we had bought a very large incubator to hatch turkey eggs. We hatched about 1,500 poults. Earl had built a brooder house which was heated with a furnace that had steam heat. The turkeys were kept on wire until they were six weeks old when they were turned out on the range. Earl fixed our Chevrolet car so he could sleep in it and could stay out with the turkeys at night, as the coyotes were bad. Also there were many prairie fires that summer.

The rest of South Dakota was very dry in 1936, but this part had the good grass which had grown up in 1935, so many people here took in stock to pasture. Some of them didn't have their pastures fenced so the rest of us had to put up with roaming cattle. I remember that we bought corn to fatten our turkeys and the only place we could feed them was in the pole corral, as the hungry, stray cattle would crawl or jump any wire fence.

The turkey market went to pieces that fall. We sold two truck loads of prime turkeys and hardly made anything on them. Then we started picking the rest, packing them in barrels and shipping them to Chicago. They brought a pretty good price that way. Throughout the winter that was our main job. It was a mighty hard one. Each evening we would pin-feather and pack them. Often Earl would have to scoop a lot of snow so he could get them to town so they could be shipped. One day we came into the house and smelled rubber. We found our sons, Bob and Dean, up on the kitchen range reaching for the clock. Their shoe soles were almost on fire. From then on we hired Eva Sharp to watch the children while we worked. We had taken our daughter, Helen Marie, to Winner to go to St. Marys school because our roads were drifted full of snow so frequently that winter.

It was on one of the trips to White River with barrels of turkeys that Earl was scooping through a drift when he saw two men were shoveling from the other side. When they got together he found they were Pete Hafner and John Gionetta from Ludlow, S. D. They had brought a large herd of horses down to a pasture north of Mission, S. D., early in the fall. When they came to look at them, they found many dead and the rest in very poor shape. They wanted to bring them to our place so we agreed and the money that had been saved for the radio and washing machine went to buy oats for the horses.

Lester Hafner stayed with us throughout the spring and broke horses to sell on purchase orders. It was getting hard to sell horses at that time as people were buying tractors. We hired Reinhold Deutsch to do most of our farming with his tractor.

We used our incubator to hatch turkey eggs for Sime Fridy of White River that spring, and raised his turkeys until the Fourth of July in our brooder house. Hafners



and Gionettas moved their horses on July 9th, driving them back to Ludlow, S. D.

We raised a good garden by irrigating it. Had lots of vegetables; enough to feed nine to eleven men during the latter part of July and August of 1937. Carl Klinkenbeard built our first big stock dam and they also boarded here while doing some road work with their dump trucks.

On September 25, 1937, our son, William, was born. We also bought the gasoline powered washing machine and a battery operated radio. We have had many appliances since but none were ever so appreciated as that first washing machine and radio. They sent a reading lamp with the radio. It wasn't long until we decided that we should have a six volt windcharger to keep the radio battery charged. Then we had electric lights in two of the four rooms in the house. I also had a gas iron to iron the clothes with.

During Christmas vacation in 1937 I took Helen Marie, Robert, Dean and Billie to Spencer, Nebr., to visit my folks. Helen Marie went to St. Marys Academy in O'Neill.

On March 13, 1939, our son, Richard Lee, was born. He was very small, weighing four and a half pounds. His first few months were spent crying with colic, but by the time he was two months old, he got along fine. Helen Marie was busy with 4-H club, as Helen Valburg had organized it the summer before. The ladies of the community had the Ring Thunder Extension club which was organized in 1934.

Election day of 1940 will always be remembered by the Adrians. Earl was chairman of the election board at the Deutsch School. We had a big snow storm just before election. However, it was clear that morning, so Earl tied the ballot box on the saddle of one horse, and he rode the other across the prairie to the school house ten miles northwest. The only ones who could get there that morning were Dave Deutsch and his sons. In the afternoon Fred and Martin Littau got there with a team and wagon.

In 1939 Ann Sammons taught our school and kept Bob and Helen Marie at the Otterman log house a quarter of a mile south of the school. In the fall of 1940, the district agreed to have the Shaeffer children, Deiss children and our two oldest ones stay at the log house. The district would pay part of the expense. We hired various ones to take care of them: Erna Hill, a couple of Littau girls, and later Mrs. McCabe from Winner.

We bought the Reichardt place from the Federal Land Bank and in the fall of 1941 had their house moved up to the home place. Earl hired Shorty Scull to remodel it.

Cattle prices were down that fall and Earl didn't sell our three-year-old steers until December 6th, as he was trying to get ten cents per pound for them. The next day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. I heard President Roosevelt give his famous speech over the radio when he declared our country in a state of war. That Friday, Earl went to Winner and brought back a bunch of yearling steers.

Shortly after that, prices began to soar and the Government established a set of war regulations for the public. Many materials became hard to get and some you could not buy at all. One of the items was overalls, because the factories were producing war materials. I was able to get two bolts of denim, so from then on, our boys' overalls were home-made. Flour sacks, of cloth those days, were used in making underwear and bedding. Everyone was asked to plant a victory garden. We had

huge ones, canned over 450 quarts of food. We still have our ration books. Gas, kerosene and sugar were some of the items rationed.

On March 14, 1942, we moved into our ten-room house. Some amusing memories of the change to a larger house are that the two youngest sons, Billy, aged five, and Dick, aged three, were afraid to sleep alone in their bedroom. To add to their fears, their father killed some prairie dogs and told them that they were baby coyotes. He laid them on the back porch to be used as fish bait. So the children developed a deathly fear of the back porch and for a long time wouldn't go near it alone or into the basement.

Earl dealt for a 32-volt light plant. We had a well dug east of the house and water piped into the house. One evening, when the electricians were wiring the house, the children were playing hide and seek. Later it was discovered that Billie was missing. Every place was checked; Earl even went to the creek with the flashlight. Again the house was searched and he was finally found, standing up asleep at the side of some sacks of flour. He was leaning against the flour with his head resting on one of the sacks, which were in the front clothes closet, and it was hard to see the chubby little boy sleeping there.



Mr. and Mrs. Earl Adrian and Four of Their Grandchildren

The years have rolled along. Helen Marie graduated from St. Marys Academy at O'Neill, Nebr., in 1946, attended teachers college for two years and married Harold C. Hanson in August, 1948. They live at Casper, Wyo., and have a happy family of seven children.

Robert Earl attended St. Marys Academy for one year, then went to Winner high school, graduating in 1951. He attended Brookings State College for two years, joined the army and served in Korea. He married Patricia Grimshaw, Mission, S. D., in October, 1957. They own the former Georgeff ranch and have two fine boys.

Donald Dean graduated from high school in Winner with high honors. He attended Notre Dame University, Ind., for five years, earning his degree in Liberal Arts and Civil Engineering. He then attended the University at Berkeley, Calif., and earned his Sanitary Engineering



Degree and also his Masters Degree. At present he attends Stanford University and is working for his Ph.D. in engineering.

William Eugene graduated from Winner high in 1955, then attended Oklahoma State Tech, Okmulgee, Okla., for three years, taking diesel engineering and graduating there. At present William is in partnership at the home ranch with his father.

Richard Lee graduated from Winner high school in 1958, went to an electrical school in Denver for one year, and has taken two years at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisc.

All four sons won many medals in competition in athletic events.

Earl and his four sons are members of the Mission Council of the Knights of Columbus. Earl is a fourth degree Knight.

Bess has been a grand Regent of the Catholic Daugh-

ters Court of Mission; Our Lady of the Sioux, number 1767 for three and one half years. She is also active in the Altar Society at Norris Sacred Heart Church. She has been an extension club member since 1934. Is a charter member of the South Dakota CowBelles and the National CowBelles. In all of these organizations she has held the position of secretary, treasurer, vice-president, and president, except National CowBelles.

Adrians' have a large ranch, raising a lot of cattle. Some of these they feed out and part of them they sell to Eastern cattle feeders. They have built up a demand for their cattle.

Both Earl and Bess have taken an active interest in community affairs. They have seen their home grow, from a ten by twelve shack that they started to keep house in 33 years ago, into a modern home with telephone, electricity, and a graveled road past their place, but both realize that the comforts of this world are not their goal.

## Tom Berrys, Mellette County Pioneers

By Nell Phipps

In 1912 came the good news that Mellette County in South Dakota was opened to homesteaders. In the spring of 1913, Tom and Lorena Berry, with their four children, left their home in Nebraska and got ready to start to South Dakota. The household possessions were loaded into the hayrack on one wagon and the bedding, canned fruit and vegetables into the covered wagon.

The children, Nell, Faye and Paul, were helped into the wagon and the lines were handed over to Lorena. It was her first experience at driving a four-horse team. Tom and son, Baxter, age seven, drove the cattle. The hired man wrangled the range horses. They traveled about fifteen miles daily. At noon they ate a lunch, resting the horses awhile before going on. Late in the afternoon a camp site would be selected where they would camp for the night.

Spring was coming to the prairie land. Meadow-larks sang along the way, the air was balmy and the new grass showed a faint green. The thrill of new adventure and great hopes for the future filled their hearts as they came nearer to their destination. The last stretch of the journey was over rough Bad-Lands. With steady hands, Lorena drove the four-horse team pulling the covered wagon over the precipitous trail. On April 28, 1913, they finally arrived at the spot which was to become their

future home. The site chosen on which to build a house was in a curve of the Black Pipe Creek; this was on a small flat where there was wood and water. The men started building a house 16x30 feet, of cedar logs bought from an Indian. The house was chinked between the logs and daubed with clay.



Mr. and Mrs. Tom Berry  
at Their "Hideout"

(Picture by Bill Morganfield)

Other settlers came in and soon they had several neighbors. Often they all gathered at the Berry ranch to dance, sing and visit. There were square dances, jigs and round dancing. The musical instruments were guitars, violins, banjos and mouth harps. Lorena's piano was a prized possession. After the festivities were over, the visitors all hitched their teams to their wagons and buggies, and drove back to their homes in the early morning hours.

In 1914, Cleve Berry settled near Cedarbutte and founded the 33 ranch. Claude also settled near there in 1916.

The open range extended for many miles around them without any fences. Tom and Baxter had to ride line on the cattle and horses to hold them. When the Indian Roundup wagon came through Tom had to see to it that



Berry's Camping Enroute to Homestead



his cattle were grazing on homestead land or school sections as the wagon boss had been ordered to pick up and bring in all stray stock to the Rosebud Agency. Then the owners had to pay \$1.00 per head to get them back.

Another cause of worry to the settlers were the packs of grey wolves that killed many colts and calves. They were even known to pull down two-year-old steers. Sometimes the homesteaders would be awakened in the early morning by the sounds of running horses or the bawling of cattle. The wolves would surround the stock and pull them down by the flanks or crowd them over cliffs in their panic. Fred Hanson, a trapper, shot and trapped many of the big greys. The ranchers paid him a bounty for those he caught or killed. As they became fewer and even more cunning, the bounty was \$100.00 each on those left. The last wolf known killed in Mellette County was in 1918.

The supplies for the Berrys XX ranch were freighted from Belvidere by team and wagon. The crossing at the Big White River was at the Thode ranch. When it was shallow the river could be forded, but when it was up and muddy it was crossed either by swimming or by a cable on which hung a box. This was operated by pul-

leys, and the travelers pulled themselves across hand over hand. Many travelers, coming or going, made the Thode ranch a stopping place.

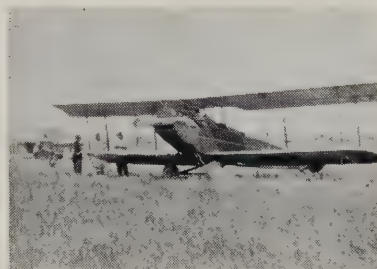
Tom Berry was active in community affairs, helping to promote roads, a telephone line, schools and other improvements. In 1922 he was elected to the South Dakota State legislature. In 1932 he was elected Governor of South Dakota, serving a four-year term during the drouth and depression. His son, Baxter, took over the management of the home ranch. Baxter married Lyndall Woodburn of Interior, whose parents were also pioneers of the West River area. Baxter Berry introduced the first Highland cattle into South Dakota and raises them on his ranch at the present time.

Nell Berry, now Mrs. Burrell Phipps, and her husband operate the Seven Cross ranch on Black Pipe Creek. Faye Berry is Mrs. Ralph Jones of Midland. The Jones family are old-time residents of Haakon County. Paul Berry established a ranch north of Norris, which his sons, Keith and Baxter, now operate since the death of their father.

Tom Berry died in 1951 after moving to Rapid City. Mrs. Lorena Berry still makes her home there.



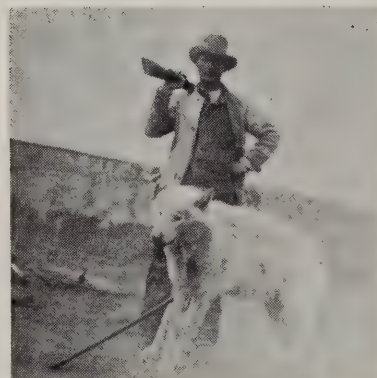
**Berry's Cattle, 1913**



**First Plane in White River**



**Tom Berry Filling the Water Barrels**



**Fred Hanson, State Trapper,  
and a Grey Wolf**



# Thirteen Years In South Dakota

By J. B. Brown

A few of the facts that I can remember in my thirteen years of residence in South Dakota:

In 1911 the daily newspapers stressed the opportunity of owning your own home in the wonderful Rosebud Country of South Dakota.

My chum induced me to go with him to Gregory, S. D., to register for the drawing. The name J. B. Brown came out number 150. I had no thought of going there to live, but after the Omaha papers came out stating that the low numbers were worth ten thousand dollars, my father encouraged me to go look the country over.

During that winter cupid played it's part in convincing a young school teacher in Colby, Kan., that Mellette County would be an interesting place to spend our honeymoon.

On September 16, 1912, I shipped out from Oberlin, Kan., in an immigrant car loaded with a team of horses, a pair of mules, two cows and farm implements. I moved out on our claim eleven miles northeast of Wood, and established residence, September 23, 1912. It began snowing that night and continued snowing all the next day; it was the only time I ever regretted seeing South Dakota.

Mrs. Brown arrived a week later. By that time, I had nailed a few boards together for a windbreak and had a tarp for a roof. Then we began to improve our place, first by digging a well twenty feet deep where we found plenty of water; then we built a comfortable two room house and other sheds for our livestock.

Our fuel problem was solved by going to Oak Creek and buying a few trees from John Beauvois, in which I received two heats—one in working it up, and the one we appreciated the most, when it was in the stove.

In spite of the thirteen large rattlesnakes we killed between the house and garden that summer, we were successful in growing some very nice vegetables which helped out with the family budget.

In 1913 the Wood school board employed me to teach the Langley school, located eight miles east of Wood in an abandoned homestead dwelling, ten by twelve feet, at a salary of \$30.00 per month.

March 17, 1914, we purchased the Draper Mercantile Co. store from Mr. C. McGilvrie. So began the J. B. Brown General store in Wood, that continued in business for just eleven years. We sold out to the Outlaw Store in Winner, March 17, 1925.

A. K. Wood, an early Indian trader, operated a store on Butte Creek, one-half mile south of the present town

of Wood. He helped survey and promote the town of Wood in 1910 and 1911 and it was named in honor of Mr. A. K. Wood.

Some two miles southwest of Wood, the Berkley townsite was laid out and promoted by the Jackson Townsite Co. A schoolhouse was built there that served the community for several years. C. B. Holland operated a general store in Berkley for several years, later moving his stock of goods to White River where he continued in business.

In 1912 and 1913 the following business houses were in operation in Wood with these persons in charge: Fairview Hotel run by Ella Thompson. First State Bank, G. L. Watson, vice-president, Merle Kaufman, cashier. The Mellette County Pioneer (Ralph Cole, Editor until March 23, 1913), Fred C. Kirch, Editor and publisher. The Wood Bakery by I. Kaufman. Wood Meat Market by Harry Nelson. Wood Mercantile Company operated by Sherman & Hancock. Draper Mercantile Company by C. McGilvrie. Charlie Abourezk had a general store. Dick Menard a grocery. Dabney Miller the Wood Hardware Store. Ernie Wilmoth the Barber Shop. Von Seggern & Utz the Lumber Yard. Kenneth Mellott the Green Liv-  
ery Barn. Alex Dessera a Blacksmith Shop. Jack Hocking a Pool Hall. Andy Eastman a Pool Hall. Moxie a restaurant and Mr. Carter was the Postmaster.

The first Masonic Lodge in the county was organized in 1913 at Wood with H. C. Van Valkenburgh, Master; Fred C. Kirch, Secretary. The first hall was a two-story building on main street.

The Eastern Star was organized in 1917. The Masons built their present hall on Second Street in 1920.

The first Sunday School in Wood was organized in May 1914, with Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Green, sons Durwood and Olney, and Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Brown. Rev. J. B. Keepers, a minister living in the Cody neighborhood, would fill the pulpit.

The Congregational Church of Wood was organized in 1915 and Rev. H. C. Van Valkenburgh was called to fill the pulpit on a semi-monthly basis. Rev. E. C. Salter was called by the church in about 1920 to be the first resident pastor.

Mr. A. K. Wood was appointed one of the first County Commissioners for district number one. Upon his death in 1913, S. R. Langley was appointed to fill out the unexpired term.

The school and political elections in those days did not lack enthusiasm. We fought hard for our side and the next day, when the noise of battle had died down, we all accepted our new officers with good graces, holding no after grudges. Some of the election laws were violated a little with no contest that I can recall when in the election of 1914 some of the voting booths closed along about three o'clock in the afternoon, because the black clouds began rolling up and the homesteaders knew that it was high time to get home and round up the stock for the night before the storm hit.

In the political landslide of 1920, two men fought valiantly to stem the tide in the county but to no avail. At any rate one faced the large storm on election day, finding the snow drifts too large to get through with a car, he mounted a horse and rode to Wood and worked all day.



Richard Brown

Maurice Brown





Our mail service in those early days was hauled from Winner to Carter, then relayed on to Wood by means of horses, two or three times a week, roads and weather permitting. Later on we received daily mail.

A snow storm in 1915 closed the road from Carter to Wood for about a week. Some ten or twelve ambitious men from Wood, weary of reading stale papers, decided they would remedy the situation; by hitching a team to a sled and using shovels they cleared the road.

Bert Humphrey received a contract to haul the mail from Winner to White River in 1916, and with that stripped down Model T Ford, the daily mail went through, regardless of snow, mud or high water!

Wash Leedom, a public spirited pioneer, opened up a blacksmith shop in 1916. In front of it he put down a well and installed a pump which supplied us all with good drinking water. This became the town pump and the tin cup that was chained to it was used by all; no germs in those early days.

Wood discarded the oil lamps in 1920 when Fred C. Kirch, Charlie Abourezk, J. H. Bundy and J. B. Brown organized the Wood Light and Power Company and employed Raymond Stahl to operate it.

The transportation problem in those days was a difficult one. Those forty miles on a dirt road were bad and in wet weather almost impossible. The county had little money to put in culverts and bridges. So we just waded through the best we could. It would take two days by team and wagon to make the trip from Winner to Wood after loading. Carter was the half-way point. They would put up for the night there and in zero weather they would place a lantern under the tarp of the wagon that contained the fruit and vegetables to keep them from freezing. The movement of the wagon while it was traveling kept the fruit from freezing then.



Freight teams for Browns Store, Wood. Miles Leedom and McKee, drivers.

We improved on that somewhat in 1917. We re-modeled a Model T Ford car by removing the body and rear wheels and installing a pair of heavy solid rubber tired wheels with sprockets, making it a chain drive truck. About two years later the auto companies came out with improved trucks that relieved the transportation somewhat. Especially in hauling the cream to a railroad, as the dairy industry soon became quite a business in Mellette County.

The month of July 1916 we bought over seven and a half tons of cream. In butterfat content that was 5,806 pounds at 23c per pound, netting the farmers \$1,235.00 for the month of July. Only once did the farmers have to resort to churning the cream into butter; during those weeks the Missouri River had taken out some bridges, cutting out our traffic line.

Walter Hagman bought a new modern truck in 1921 and from then on our cream was hauled to a railroad and goods returned on a daily schedule which made it possible for us to deliver the cream in good condition.

The merchants, as well as the Indians, looked forward to, as we called it "The Payment." It was money that had accumulated from the sales of Indian land, which the Government held in trust for the tribe. These payments were held sometimes twice a year and again they would miss a year. The amount varied, usually from twenty to fifty dollars to each person. A clerk from the Rosebud Agency would come over and make the payment, usually from the bank. And the merchants would also be in line to collect their credit bills.

On one occasion Old Iron Shooter, after being touched by his creditors, finally reached the door. Looking down at his hand he saw that he had thirteen cents left. He made one mighty swing with his arm and the two nickels and three pennies must have hit all four walls. At least he was broke again and ready to make the rounds for more credit.

The Sioux Indians enjoyed putting on their own celebrations which they did several times from 1912 to 1918. They would pitch their tents on the outskirts of Wood, completely surrounding the town. Sometimes we estimated their number anywhere from three to five thousand. They enjoyed a Sunrise March around the town and also seemed to get a great deal of satisfaction out of re-enacting the Battle of the Little Big Horn (The Custer Massacre). Some of the oldtimers were still living that had taken a part in the battle.

The Christmas season was a gala occasion among the Sioux Indian children in the Wood community and they all looked forward to it with great expectation. The committee from the Episcopal Church, located one mile south of Wood on Butte Creek, would come in the 23rd of December with the money they had collected. Also, a list of names of the boys and girls that were to receive presents, with so much allowed for candy, nuts and fruit. They would leave the selection up to me for the toys, then Christmas Eve they would have their tree.

The Catholic Church Committee, located west of town on White Thunder Creek, would do the same as the Episcopal Committee did except that they would come in on Christmas Day for me to fill out their order. They would have their tree Christmas Night. It worked out very nice for me as I had very few toys to carry over.

The Mellette County Fair was organized in 1912 and the location was Wood. They were handicapped in not having a suitable place to house the display in, however, they did very well in those early years. Both the flower





Baling Hay at Wood for "Hay Palace" — County Fair.

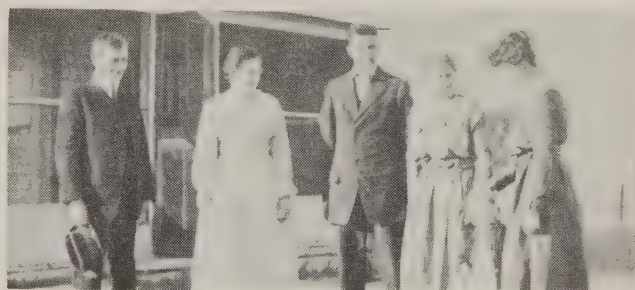
and garden exhibits as well as the field crop samples would have been a credit to an older county. The ladies' booth, the needlework department, as well as the pastry, pickles and jams were something to be proud of. One year, Fred C. Kirch planned a hay palace to house the fair, made of baled hay. Charlie Eaton, an efficient man at baling hay, supervised the project. The Model T chain-drive truck hauled the hay to the location.

The prairie fires that were so numerous in Mellette County in 1912 and 1913 made headlines in the Chicago Dailies. The largest one we fought in was caused by an Indian having a grudge against another Indian living with his family on the Bad Nation Trail. In revenge he set his house on fire which soon spread to the grass, and fed by a strong wind, was not brought under control until it reached the hay flats of Nebraska. At least one good thing came out of those prairie fires. We all responded and helped put out the fires, and by so doing we met many nice people that would have taken us a long time to get acquainted with otherwise.

The blizzard that struck the night of March 13th, 1913, and continued for three days, did much damage to livestock. It completely covered the low sheds and blocked many doorways to homesteaders' homes. Our neighbor, Thelma Cousins, said she was able to crawl through a window the second day to feed her pony.

The Reader's Digest a few years ago gave a very descriptive account of the large timber wolves that ravaged the country along the Big White River from the Badlands down through Mellette County in the winter of 1912 and 1913, killing the livestock. At times they made us feel a little uneasy at night when the coyotes were howling.

The Wood trade territory in those early years had many progressive farmers. To name just a few of them: Joe Siegmund, George Moore, Ray Rankin, A. J. Krieger, Roy Galbraith, Chester Derry, Fred and Will Egleston, Cody Sinning, Carl Sorenson, Sherwood Brothers, the Butterfield and the C. L. Kidwiler ranches, Mark Payne Hampshire, hog raiser, and Kenneth Mellott, hog raiser and shipper.



Mr. and Mrs. Cody Sinning, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hamilton, Mrs. Brown and Richard.

Col. C. P. Jordan came to the Rosebud country in 1884. He established a trading post at the Rosebud Agency which he operated for many years. He married a chief's (Red Cloud) daughter, and according to the early writers of Sioux history, he was very influential in their tribal disputes. He later built a nice home on Butte Creek and planted the first apple orchard in Mellette County. We had the privilege of selling his apples over the counter.

## The Unforeseeable

By W. Ben Elley

In the early summer of 1918 the wife and I came to White River to visit the Charles Scheurer family. They had formerly been close neighbors of ours in Missouri. They had always painted a glowing account of the country and we, being of a roving nature, decided to have a look at Mellette County. We spent about two weeks looking the country over and before we left we bought the Charley Morrow place for a starter.

I came back later in the same summer and started to build up a ranch. I went into the sheep business of which I knew very little about. But things did look favorable as the first World War was in full swing and wool was in big demand. This venture was wiped out soon after the war ended, the depression hit us full in the face, banks closed and prices went to the bottom of the barrel.

Along in the fall of 1918 we had an epidemic of the flu which almost wiped out all the settlers of Mellette County. I got right into the middle of it by going to help some neighbors that had come down with it. No

one knew exactly what it was yet, nor how to take care of it, so it spread rapidly. Naturally, I was exposed and got it.

The Linus Anderson family found me terribly sick with it, and through their help, I was rushed to White River for treatment. We were blessed that we had a Doctor Schmitters there who was a very capable doctor. She had seven diplomas from the largest Medical Colleges in the world, one being from Heidelberg, Germany. She knew how to handle this disease and by her help I was pulled through. But as she later said, she didn't have much to go on, as my chips were down to zero when she took hold of me.

White River did not have a hospital nor any place to take sick people so that they could be even partially taken care of. The Masonic Hall was converted into a hospital and rooms were partitioned off with curtains as room walls. We were piled in there like sick sardines and with help that volunteered we were nursed back to normal.

A teacher in the school there in White River, by the



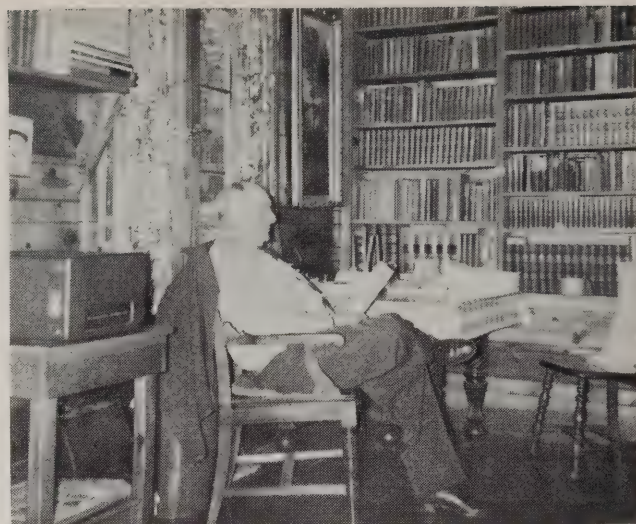
name of Miss Tarleton, was an angel to us poor unfortunates. She worked night and day along with the doctor taking care of all those that were brought in. Where the doctor got at them in time she pulled them through. She lost only one patient whom she visited and that one died in a few short minutes after arriving at the makeshift hospital. That was not her fault as the patient did not have a chance. The doctor injected medicine into us that we, nor anyone else knew what it was. But she did and it took effect immediately. She had brought this medicine over here from the Old Country and had enough on hand to see her through one of the worst epidemics that ever hit a country.

Cars were very scarce at that time. I happened to have a new Dodge which I turned over to those who were well enough to travel. Milk had to be brought in from the country, groceries hauled out to the sick, and the dead had to be buried. "Doc" O'Reilly of the Drug Store was going day and night, acting as coroner and distributing medicine to the stricken. He went out to see one family and found all of them dead, excepting a baby which was strapped into a high chair. It lived through the ordeal.

Not knowing how to care for ourselves after the first shock of the disease was over, a lot of us left the hospital before we were really well. This caused many of us to come down with pneumonia. I was one of them. We had to get out of the hospital just as fast as we could to make room for newcomers sicker than we were.

I went from the school house at White River, which had also been turned over later to use as an emergency hospital, to my ranch. The next morning I was just about gone with double lobar pneumonia. A neighbor went into town and coaxed good old Dr. Schmitters into coming out to see me. She gave me a shot and said for me to get someone to help, if possible, as I would be down for quite a spell, IF I MADE IT!

Someone happened to hear about a trained nurse up in the Stamford country by the name of O'Connor. Chas. Scheurer went to see her. She had just come off a case and was all worn out. She said she couldn't come unless her sister came with her. He loaded both of them in and came back to me with help. She nursed me back to health but this time, she made me stay put until I was



**Mr. Elley sitting in Badger Clark's favorite chair at the Badger Hole. Books and furniture left exactly as Badger Clark left it.**

able to navigate and had regained my strength. This weakness was what got so many into trouble the second time, in not knowing how to handle the flu. It wouldn't have been nearly so severe if people had known that it sapped so much strength from one's body, and how to take care of themselves accordingly.

November 11 came along about this time and the war was over. The bottom fell out of everything. People that were wealthy the day before were reduced to poverty almost over night.

Calamities of this nature tend to make the tie among friends so binding that they never forget. The next spring Mrs. Elley and the three children joined me and we continued to live in White River until I went to work for the State and moved to Hot Springs. Our daughter, Hazel, married a White River boy, Arthur Howlett.

We still have fond memories of White River and the surrounding country. At present my wife and I are custodians of the Badger Clark Memorial (The Badger Hole) in Custer State Park.

## Early Day History

**By Sophia Smith Endes**

In April 1912 my father, John Smith, came to Mellette County and filed on a homestead, SE 19, 42-27. Dad purchased a team of horses, a wagon, a set of harness and a walking plow. He lived in a tent, until he had time to build a house. He hobbled his horses, as there were no fences. One morning he woke up to find his team gone. They could not be found anyplace, so he walked to White River and told the sheriff. He was informed that most likely someone had taken them. The two men saddled up their horses, and rode towards what is now Winner, as the night before, word had come into town that some Indians had been spotted with a herd of horses. Dad and the sheriff caught up with them and at first the Indians refused to give the horses up. But when the sheriff was about to arrest them they let Dad have his horses. One horse was black and one was white, very easy for him to identify.

One day Dad saw a snake sunning itself in the sunshine. He thought it looked quite pretty and was on the verge of picking it up, when the snake started to rattle and strike. Later he learned that it was a rattlesnake and was very poisonous. In fact, later on in the year, he lost one of his horses from a rattler's bite.

Along in the month of June, a cousin of mine, John Beck, came to stay with my father and helped put up a frame house. They hauled lumber from Murdo and White River. To make the house warm for the winter-time, squares of sod were laid around the outside, as far up as the roof.

In September of 1912, my mother and I arrived in Mellette County. We came on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad from Tacoma, Wash. We arrived at Murdo McKenzie, as Murdo was called then, and Dad met us at the depot. We drove home in a wagon. I remember we came across the Big White River, near the



Westover Post Office. The Westover Bridge was not completed yet. Mother did not like this country at first, but I did, because I liked to run after the butterflies. Mother warned me not to stray away too far. I remember saying that this was a good country because the clothes dried so fast. In the part of the country that we came from, the weather was so damp that it took several days for our clothes to dry.

Dad and my cousin soon started to dig a well. Then a fellow came along (it seems as though his name was Winnegar) and he finished digging the well with his machine. The well was 70 feet deep, and that was the hardest water I ever saw. You had to break it with lye in order to wash clothes.

I have a map that is 51 years old. It is a map showing the land open for settlement on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota under the President's proclamation of June 29, 1911. Also a schedule of lands that were open on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations on April 15, 1912. Also an early homesteader's map.

I started to school in the fall of 1913, with my cousin. We drove a one-horse buggy to and from school, unless my parents took us. The school was held at Mrs. Byrne's house. Miss Estelle Wise was the teacher. The pupils were the Greenwald children, Proctor and Mason Richards, Gordon Fulton, John Beck and myself. The next year school was held in Cody Sinning's house. Later this house was sold and became the Frank Barcal and later the Novotny home. This house was destroyed by fire Dec. 25, 1952. In 1914 Miss Mary Hise Norton was our teacher. She homesteaded near us on NW 29 42-27. I believe she came from Keokuk, Ia. Her sister, Mrs. Leigerot, and their two daughters, Emma Lela and Lucille, stayed with her. Leo Leigerot also came out later.

Emma Lela Leigerot, Winifred (Cleo) Egleston and I were some of the pupils that went to school there. The term of 1914-15, Noah Gerig from Happy Hollow, was our teacher. Quite a number of pupils attended that year and some came quite a distance. Iver, Mons, Joseph and Melvin Week, Proctor, Mason and Burdette Richards, Anna Barcal, Winifred Egleston and myself.

The term of 1915-16, Ernest Hamilton was the teacher and school was held in the new house Cody Sinning had just built. Pupils that year were Leona, Minnie, Stella, Bernice and Mildred Bronson; Anna Barcal; Christine Gunner, and Donald Wilmas, besides the pupils of the year before.

The next year (1916-17 term) a school house was built on the hill, on the northeast corner of the Frank Barcal land, and the Cody school was held there until it was moved in 1926 to its present location on the northeast corner of Section 29 42-27.

Before the Cody School District was organized, our school was under the supervision of the White River District No. 2. In 1915, the County Superintendent was Thomas Green. School board directors were W. H. Hollenback, chairman; C. F. Manson, treasurer; A. R. Dendy, clerk.

E. H. Hamilton taught the school the first year it was on the hill.

In the 1917-18 term, Mrs. (Will) Helen E. Egleston taught. The pupils were Gordon Fulton, Proctor, Mason and Burdette Richards, Donald Willmas, Henry and Sophia Fillbrandt, Mons, Melvin, Joseph and Reinhart Week, Anna and Frank Barcal, Milton Gunn, Sophia Smith, Winifred Egleston, Christine Gunner, Jesse and Augustine Strike.

The term of 1918-19 was again started by Helen E. Egleston. According to the records from the county superintendent's office, the next Cody school teachers were as follows: 1919-20 term was divided between Miss Cougall and Cecil Hill; 1921-22, Mrs. Lou Simpkins and Mrs. Hazel E. Fitch; 1922-23, Adele P. Schroeder; 1923-24, Adele P. Schroeder; 1924-25, Florence Kenzy; 1925-26, Florence Kenzy. Then the school house was moved and enlarged.

Back in the homesteading days, there were a lot of people living in the neighborhood. Practically every quarter section of land had someone living on it. John Olson lived to the west of us; Henry Peter to the northwest; Fred Egleston to the southwest; and Cody Sinning to the south, to mention a few.



**CODY SCHOOL.** Back row (left to right): Mrs. Hazel E. Fitch, teacher; Paul Mueller, Tom Bailey, (behind him) Ralph Simpkins, Pat Bailey (tie), (behind him) Fred Mueller, Milton Mueller, Sophia Smith (Endes), Christine Gunner (Wolf), (Cleo) Winifred Egleston (Reutter). Front row: Rudolph Sykora, Frank Barcal (tie), (Tink) Eldred Atwood, Orville Poore, Woodrow Atwood, Bill Sykora, Wesley Egleston, Anna Barcal, Delbert Mueller, and Vyvenne Tisdell.



There was also some unfenced Indian land and herds of wild cattle. One had to be careful, because they would take after people.

My folks went to town one day with a lot of eggs. They had a driving team of black mares at this time. As they were trotting along, near what we call the Gus Paul place, something scared the team. The folks could not hold them so they jumped from the buggy. The team was later caught, tangled up in a fence. The folks scraped what was left of their produce off the buggy, and returned home. That was the end of their trip to town that day. The next day one of the neighbors, John Sauers, came over and said the crows had certainly had a good, free feed.

People traveled quite a bit, even though transportation was much different than today. One either walked, rode horseback or traveled in a wagon or buggy. There were only a few cars, mostly owned by a few townspeople who used them to haul passengers from town to town. Once in a while, one would go through the countryside and every one would think it was something special to see. I remember when a couple of men came to our place and they were telling about being out in one of the early blizzards. They were enroute home as the storm struck, so they turned their horses loose and burned their lumber and wagon to keep from freezing. The horses later were found frozen, so the men were lucky to have lived through the storm.

The road from Westover to Wood was near our place. One day a prairie fire started. We presumed one of the many travelers had tossed a cigarette into the tall prairie grass. This fire burned north toward the river, taking nearly everything in its path. Several homesteader's shacks went up in the fire but no lives were lost. One of the shacks that burned was that of Mr. Beauchamp. A lot of pasture land was burned, and considerable wild life destroyed. The men gathered and fought fire with sacks soaked in water. Others hauled water with barrels and cans in wagons.

I remember that my mother took out food and hot coffee for the men as they fought fire far into the night. Usually the fires went clear to the river unless someone made a backfire to stop them. There had been several of them that night. This was in 1916.

One time we had a pet cat. He was white with black spots and had been with us for several years. He would go away for several days to hunt, sometimes bringing back a gopher and leaving it at our doorstep. One time he was gone for several days but we did not think anything of it, as we presumed he was on a hunting trip. Mother had seen something hanging on a fence about a quarter mile from the house, and supposed it was a rag or piece of paper. Later we walked through the pasture and discovered it was our beloved cat, hanging on the barbed wire fence, its paw caught on a barb.

Wild fruit was plentiful in those early days. You could see many buffalo-berry trees. Some called them squaw-berries because you would see the Indians drying them in the sun for winter's use. We also had a lot of chokecherries and plums. We would go out and pick buckets and sacks full, then go home and get the team and wagon to haul the fruit in, as it would often be several miles that we had to go to the plum thickets. We would dry some in the sun, finish them off a little in the oven, and put them in cloth flour sacks. Some were canned, sometimes only the juice being cooked off, and canned or made into jelly right away.

One afternoon mother and I walked over to Bill Smith's place, about one and a half miles north, to visit. I wanted some goslings, so Mrs. Smith gave us some. The sun had already set when we started for home. We hadn't gone very far, when we thought something was behind us. Mother was carrying the goslings in her apron and evidently two skunks had smelled them, and were following us. We ran as fast as we could to get home. Dad wanted to know what the rush was, and he had a good laugh. It is funny now—but it wasn't then.

Dad did a lot of freighting, for the grocery stores and lumber yards in both Wood and White River. A round trip to Winner took three days. One day, on a trip from Winner he got stuck in the mud. There were no roads to follow, and he had driven off on the wrong trail. He spotted an Indian and went to get help to get pulled out. He could not make the Indian understand, but called one of his younger boys. He informed my dad that but one of his younger boys. He informed my dad that he could not help him then, as it was nearing the end of the day, but he courteously invited my dad to stay for the night. So he thought he would be tasting dog soup for sure. When they sat down to supper, sure enough, the squaw served soup. But dad was surprised to find it was delicious chicken soup, with plenty of chicken in it. This happened near what was then Chilton.

I can remember when I was going to school, when it was held on the Cody Sinning place, in 1914, that there were wolves in the country. Every morning that fall, a big black wolf would come down the same path a little while before I started for school. My parents would watch me until I was close to school to make sure I was safe. Quite a few people tried to shoot this wolf, but failed. When cold weather came, that wolf disappeared and that was the last anyone ever saw of it.

My parents and many of the other homesteaders in this neighborhood have passed away, but they all helped in building this new country. They sold their homestead in 1922 and moved to another location a mile south on the creek where I still make my home.

\* \* \* \*

John Endes was born Dec. 8th, 1885 at Ukraine, in South Russia, and passed away on Monday, January 23, 1961, at his home east of White River, at the age of 75 years. He was the son of Philip and Marguerite Endes.

Mr. Endes came to America in the year 1901, with his aunt and uncle, and settled in the state of Oklahoma. They remained there for one year, then moved to Gregory, where he remained until 1916, when he moved to Mellette County and homesteaded in Cody Township.

He was united in marriage to Sophia Smith and they moved to another location in Cody Township, where he resided with his family until his death.

Survivors of Mr. Endes are: his wife, Sophia; three sons, John, Jr., Ernest and Thomas; four daughters, Marie, Viola, June and Edith; several cousins and other relatives.

Funeral services were held in the Methodist church in White River on Friday January 27, with Rev. Jensen, of White River, and Rev. Cronin of Presho Methodist church, officiating. Ted Johnson sang, "Some Day I'll Understand," and "Looking This Way," with Norma Samuelson accompanying at the organ.

Pallbearers were Tom Novotny, Paul Reutter, Wesley Egleston, Albert Jans, Jim Riley and Raymond Kimball. Interment was made in the White River Cemetery. The ladies of the Cody vicinity served a lunch in the basement of the M. E. church after graveside rites.



# Life In Mellette County, 1914 to 1955

By Mrs. Fred Gudath

My husband, Fred Gudath, and his step-brother, Art Werner, came to White River, S. D., in 1914. They left Fairfax, S. D., in March. They had a wagon, three horses and their few belongings. When they arrived in Winner they met a Mr. Asbury. He had just proved up on his claim and was leaving. He had his claim fenced and a shack on it and he wanted to rent it. This place was around twelve miles or so northeast of White River. It is northwest of the present Wm. Krogman home as it was the NE 22 42-28.

The men were caught in a snowstorm going out there, so stopped at Wood a few days. Fred's sister, Freda, had drawn number 10, which was the SE 23 41-26. Her homestead was six miles northeast of Wood. She lived on it now and then, and also worked for A. K. Wood in the town of Wood. She lives in Omaha now.

After the storm, Fred and Art started out to look for the Asbury place. They met Jake Scholl, who told them where it was. Later Art went back to Fairfax for some young cattle, shipped them to Winner and drove them out to Mellette County from there. He also brought two more horses.

Bill Hollenbeck had bought the hay and he came after it. He told Art and Fred if they wanted work they could help put up a fence along the river near his ranch. This fence went along the highway, I think it was a county fence, up to Westover. They dug a well but still hauled their drinking water from the river.

Then Art Werner bought a relinquishment seven miles east of town. He bought a shack from Stromer (and also another one) and moved them to his place. In the spring of 1915 the men moved over there.

In the spring of 1915 the Additional Homestead Act was passed. Pat Navin, a real estate man at that time, took Fred around to look at the places. As he had lived only one mile from Fairfax, he wanted a place not too far from town. He chose the one seven miles southwest of White River, S. D., SW 28 41-29, where we lived for thirty-six years.

In the spring of 1916 he went to Murdo and got lumber to build his 12 x 14 shack. He went back and forth, staying at Art Werner's part of the time. He put up hay on his land.

The first fall, Fred went back to Fairfax to help thresh. It was his job to run the steam engine. Also he helped pick corn. In the fall of 1915 the men went up to Clark, S. D., and helped thresh around there.

Art Werner will be remembered by some of the people at White River. When the dry years hit, they sold out and went to Arkansas. Sometimes he would come back to White River and help thresh or pick corn. He passed away some years ago and his wife, Clara, now lives with their son in California.

The spring of 1915 brought lots of rain. One evening Fred went over to help a neighbor who was sick and did his chores. A storm came up. Back at the shack, Art was lying down. The wind took the shack but Art got rolled up in the bedding and mattress so didn't get hurt much except a cut on his head. They used the lumber to build a room on the other shack. Later, Art and his wife lived in it until they could build a new house. The sick neighbor's barn was blown away.



Left to Right: Clara and Art (seated) Werner and baby; Nellie, Fred (seated), Glenn and Sylvia Gudath

This neighbor wanted his hogs taken to market at Murdo that spring. He still wasn't feeling very well, but as the market was only open around the end of the month, he had Fred take up a wagon load for him. They started real early and it wasn't so bad at first. They went across country, not much of a road to follow. When they got north of Westover, they hit some mud. Up where Don Hight now lives it was really sticky. It got so bad the wheels wouldn't turn. Time and again Fred would get down and try to clean out the mud so they got to Murdo after dark. While they were traveling and having trouble in the gumbo, they met Mr. Paleck. His team couldn't pull his load and he had gotten another team from folks along the road. Where Palecks lived it was sandy and he said he sure wouldn't want any of that land up there because what could you do with it if you had it! Fred still says that is one trip he'll never forget.

Art was called to the Army in the fall of 1917. Fred and Paul Werner were called in the spring of 1918. So they had a sale to sell Fred and Art's belongings.

A prairie fire went through east of our place in 1916 when Fred and Paul were putting up hay on the homestead. There was another big prairie fire, possibly in the late summer of 1917. Art was helping build a schoolhouse near Guy Hutchinson's place (Bud Hights live there now). A neighbor saw the smoke and Fred rode over on horseback to help fight the raging fire. That fire killed many of the trees along the creek; it went through west of his place and south of town. Later we salvaged some of the dead trees for firewood.

We were married September 3, 1919. Fred had been up to Mellette County and put in some corn, also worked for Mr. Addie. Bill and Lee Valburgs lived on Legner's place (where Swede Gunner now lives) until they got their house built east of us, and lived there for years.

After our honeymoon we came to the homestead. Fred picked the corn and sold it to Chris Buum. They lived east of us on the river.

The homestead shack wasn't quite finished so we went back to Duff, Nebr., my old home, which was thirty-five miles south of Bassett. We spent the winter with my mother and helped her all we could as my dad had passed away in August 1918.

We had quite a trip getting down there from Mellette County. It had snowed and the roads were not much good in the first place. We were three days traveling the





Gudath Homestead

hundred and fifty miles with our Model T Ford. First day we made it to Mission. Next day followed the trail to Woodlake, Nebr. We got stuck six miles northwest of Woodlake in a snowdrift. It was dark but we saw a light and walked over to a farm home. They went out after supper to get the car and had a hard time finding it. We stayed there all night and the third day got to mother's. We can travel that distance now easily in four hours by car and on good roads.

In the spring of 1920 Fred bought a wagon, put bows over it and covered them with white oilcloth. This made us a covered wagon to travel in. We put our belongings in the wagon, made a frame, laid bed springs on it and our bedding. So our camp wagon was complete. Mother gave us a team of large horses. And I had my saddle horse, Robin. We had seventeen head of cattle, all sizes. We were milking some of the cows and had one little calf we hauled most of the time. Also had a crate of chickens on the back of the wagon.

We left the last of May and it took us eight days to go across country to Mellette County. Sometimes we would stop at a farm overnight if it was close by. A cousin went with us to help us drive the cows. Sometimes we would run the cattle into a fence corner where we would milk the cows and they could bed down for the night.

When we arrived at the homestead we turned the wagon box over for a hen-house and raised a lot of chickens that way.

About the first thing we bought was a separator. We milked all our cows as they came fresh until we were milking twenty cows. For awhile we churned all the cream and made it into pound prints of butter to sell. The money came in handy for all the things we needed.

July 4th, 1920, our son, Glenn, was born out on the homestead. Dr. Schmitters, the lady doctor from White River, came out.

Our 12x14 room was really well filled. We had the separator, wood box, stove, boxes for cupboards, trunk, bed, dresser, chairs, table and a rocking chair.

Cecil Stevens and family lived on the Legner place at this time. Cecil was Edna Tucker's brother. His wife, Martha, was Mrs. Buum's sister. She came over and helped us when Glenn was born. She was wonderful help. They now live in Kansas. Chris Buum was elected sheriff of Mellette County later, then Stevens moved over there.

That summer, Valburgs and Cecil Stevens helped Fred haul lumber from Crookston, Nebr., using horses

and wagons. Fred helped Valburgs pick corn and they helped him build a barn, a small hen house and also build on a kitchen with a cellar under it. We plastered both rooms and put tar paper on the outside so we were ready for winter. I was so glad when we had the kitchen finished inside and could move some of the things into it. We had plenty of hard wood to burn, which I thought was very nice because in Nebraska we had been burning cow chips as trees weren't as plentiful then as they are now. Fred hauled and cut lots of wood. We used it summer and winter. The children and I would go along sometimes. We'd fill the wagon, a big double box full.

One thing I missed at first was good water which was everywhere in Nebraska. We had no well so hauled water in barrels from the river. The children always liked to go along on these trips so they could play in the water and sand. Sometimes we got drinking water from Legner's well. After we got our own well dug it was rather hard water, so we still hauled drinking water for years in cream cans. It was quite a job. Then later Fred, with help, dug a well at the northwest corner of our place close to Legner's and got good water. Then Bartlett dug two on our place and one had good water that is still good. Fred put up ice every winter, hauling it from the river and packing it with straw in a cave. Later he built the milk house, garage and ice house. When we had company we always made lots of ice cream. Some of the children who ate ice cream with us have grown up and moved away but they tell us they still remember the ice cream parties we had.

Fred would also make our own dried beef and smoke it. We were close to the school house and other children would come home with our children. We had a water pond right close by the house where the children could skate. They also took sleigh rides and enjoyed eating those dried beef sandwiches.

The first year we had fifteen acres broke. We put in a garden, strawberries and corn. I always raised some chickens with the hens.

May 14, 1922, our first girl, Sylvia Jane was born. Dr. Still came out. (Sylvia Jane passed away in 1936.)



Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gudath, Glenn, and Sylvia Jane (who passed away in 1936).





Ila Mae, Glenn, Nina Lou, Fred, Mrs. Roggasch—the late mother of Mrs. Gudath, and Mrs. Gudath, 1953.

December 22, 1929, Nina Lou was born, also out on the homestead. Mother was with us both times. Ila Mae was born November 6, 1934, in Murdo. Dr. Salladay had left White River and Dr. Murphy didn't want to go out in the country so far.

One thing I remember about the early years was the lack of trees around the house. The sun and hot winds would surely beat down on our little home. But the little trees we planted soon grew up and we had lots of shade.

Our first country school was held in Legner's house with A. C. Howlett as teacher. His wife still lives in White River. Some of our other teachers were Irene Hutchinson, Gladys McPherson, Louise Humphrey, Miss March and Virgil Van Schaack. Some of the children that went there were ours, Ozanne boys, three of Westbrook's who lived with their grandparents, the Lindquists, Emericks, Downings (they worked for Hud Rhoades), and Valburgs. They closed the school, I think in 1936, and the children had to go to town school. Glen rode the seven miles on horse back the first year of high school. Also stayed at Gatton's awhile. The second year he went to the Redfield Academy and Nina Lou boarded with Legners and others up town. When Ila Mae was old enough to go we hauled the children back and forth. Also hauled the Gunner boys and Celine Ambur. That meant get up early to do the chores as we were milking lots of cows and had to leave home at eight a. m. When it was rainy, cold or stormy it was quite a job and caused us a lot of worry. Sometimes we'd get them with a team and wagon, sometimes go with a wagon to the highway, then take the car from there. Later used the tractor occasionally. The last two years Frank Gunner drove the school bus. (Now Nina Lou is hauling our grandchildren over the same route.)

At first we attended the Methodist Church at White River, then they organized a Sunday School in a school house south of Ozannes and we went there a while. Then when Elder J. A. Estey came to White River we met in their house in town, or in our home, or at Ozannes until Elder and the members built the Seventh Day Adventist Church in White River.

The first years we were on the homestead we made our own entertainment. I think there was more neighboring and visiting back and forth than there is now. Some schools had Literary Societies, School Programs and Box Suppers. We did go to the one in Ring Thunder District, Gene Strains, Ted Johnson and others will remember. It seems years ago. I think for awhile there was a "paper" which was made up of news and humor-

ous doings in the neighborhood which was read at the programs.

In the early years there were many more families living in our neighborhood than there are now. Let's see how many I can remember. Lee and Bill Valburgs, Pete Terrys, Hud Rhoades, Legners, George Harrisons, Ozannes, Heeses, Stevensons, Currys, Jongwards, Ray Henrys, Captain Gray, Dolezals, Karstens, Nelsons, Oylers, Vopats, Petrs, Mike Dimitroffs, Marin Georgeff, Carl Gunner, Albert Berges, Bruce, Dodges, McKennetts, Gattons, Chris Buums, Rhinehart Wagner (Mrs. Buum's brother), and Sime Fridy.

Things I remember about the early Mellette County Days are these: We would meet at different homes on Sundays, everyone helping out with the dinner. The men usually played baseball. Then large surprise birthday parties—one time there were eighty that came on my birthday. One time they really surprised me. When they came I was canning tomatoes, my birthday being in August. At threshing time, neighbors helped each other, women and children went along. Frontier Days at White River were of course the big days to look forward to. Also we celebrated the Fourth of July in a big way. I can still remember during the Frontier Days at White River how the Indians would come across the country in their camp wagons several days before the doings started. I can remember hearing them beating their drums down on the river east of us in the early mornings. Generally we attended all three days and we'd usually see people that had moved away but came back for a visit. There was a Chatauqua show that traveled through here. Sometimes folks came to get Fred, day or night, to take them to the Doctor or to get a Doctor for them. Especially those who did not own cars at first. I remember one bad hail storm, with stones as big as baseballs which made holes in the roofs of the hen house, barn and also our lean-to. I remember what a wonderful thing my Maytag was after washing on the board and hand machine for so many years. We also had nice large gardens and beautiful flowers of all kinds. When it didn't rain enough, we sometimes had to water them from the pond near the house.

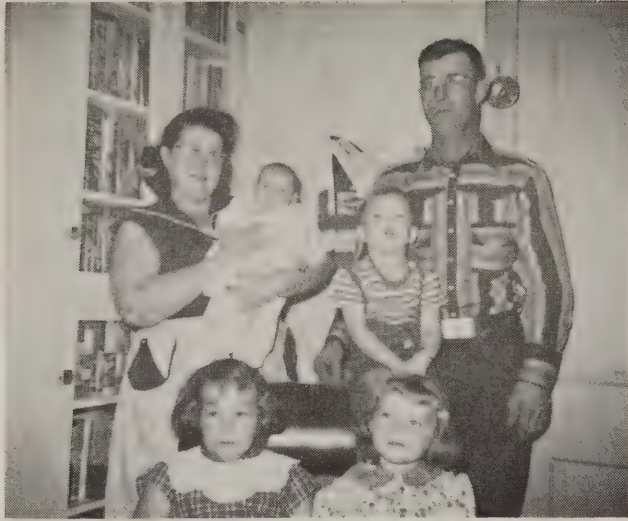
We remember reading good books aloud to the family during the evenings. How we enjoyed them. We had no radio those days. How many remember the boxes of dried fruit we could send for? If I remember right, we could get some from Gurney's at Yankton. Nice dried apples, peaches, prunes, pears, dates and figs that you never see in stores today. Also they came mixed in a box and very reasonable in price.

We also had bad snow storms which seemed so much worse than now. Then came the dust storms, grasshoppers, beetles, and mormon crickets in the early thirties.



Glenn and Family





Nina Lou and Family

Many of the neighbors moved away. We stayed but had to start all over again.

Our son, Glenn, married Alice Heinzelmann of Idaho and they have a son, Gene Glenn. Glenn works with the Soil Conservation at McIntosh, S. D.

Nina Lou married Roy Ozanne and they live on the old homestead with their four children: Melody Rae, Faye Dawn, Lee Douglas and Gaye Ann.

Ila Mae will graduate from Spearfish Teachers College May 1961 and has taught four years at Igloo, S. D.

Now, the wagon that we traveled in, the walking plow that turned the sod, and the dear old faithful horse that meant so much to us all are gone.

So the days and years have passed. Happy days and sad days. Mellette County is still home to us. There were sad times, too, when death visited us and we were bowed with grief. We also missed our close neighbors when they moved away. We still hear from them in their new homes in other states. They, like us, still miss South Dakota, Mellette County and their old friends of days gone by.

## Hodges Hardware

By Mrs. L. C. Hodges

L. C. Hodges was one of the early business men of White River, operating a hardware there. Mr. Hodges often told of living in White River for ten years without leaving—then deciding to go to a hardware convention, upon arriving in Murdo only to find out that the train had already left.

I came to White River in 1920 and we were married in 1921. After renting for a couple of years he bought the Bob Jones house which he enlarged. A son was born in 1923 but lived only a few hours. Our daughter was born in 1925.

During depression days we moved to Rapid City where we built and operated a tourist motel, selling it in 1950. Since 1943 we have lived on Quincy street, where Mr. Hodges passed away very suddenly in May of 1954.

Our daughter Hope is married and lives in Chicago. Her husband is with a contracting firm, while Hope



Hodges Hardware

owns and operates a medical laboratory, continuing her biological interests.



White River, March 1, 1912



# Our Honeymoon In Mellette County, S. Dak.

By Clyde Ilgenfritz

On June 10, 1912, Jessie and I were married in Burwell, Nebr. As she had previously drawn a claim in Mellette County, S. D., we immediately began preparations to move onto the claim.

In September 1912, we left Burwell, Nebr., "Prairie Schooner style," on our two hundred and fifty mile trip across the Nebraska Sand Hills and into South Dakota.

Our first day out was a bad one. Jessie was leaving her home and folks on an adventure of which neither of us could tell the outcome. She was quite sad and tears came into her eyes; however, this was nothing compared with the "homesickness" that was to come later.

We left Burwell and drove up the Calamus road. Leaving this road about fifteen miles out we started across the Sand Hills on the Gracie Creek road. When we were about twenty-five miles out one of our horses developed a balky streak. Some boys came along on horseback and helped us try to get the horse started. No good. It wouldn't go and finally laid down on the tongue and broke it. We pitched our tent and camped for the night. The next morning I borrowed a spring wagon from a homesteader who luckily lived close by. Loading the tongue in the wagon I drove back to where Paul Green, Jessie's brother, lived in the Loup Valley. There we repaired the tongue and traded horses. When I got back to camp that evening Jessie had adopted a dog belonging to the neighbor homesteader and this was her company for the day while I was gone.

The next morning we started on again and got along some better. We stopped at Twin Lakes with some friends of ours and then on to Dallas, S. D., where relatives, George and Bert Doran, lived about five miles north of town. We rested up for a few days and then on to Witten, S. D. Here we had more friends, Warren and Lottie Burnham, school teachers and farmers, also old schoolmates of Clyde's.

After a few days with these good people we went on to Wood and from there to White River. After staying all night at the Jones Hotel we drove out to our claim. This was located a mile and a half west of town, being the SW quarter of section 33, Twp. 42, range 29, Mellette County. The land south of us was open and our



The homestead shack of Clyde and Jessie Ilgenfritz, 1½ miles west of White River. Taken in 1913. House was built in 1912.

neighbor on the west was Ned Bear Heels and on the east Tom High Pine. To get to our claim it was necessary to ford the (Little) White River as the only bridge at that time was a swinging bridge for pedestrians.

We located where we wanted our house, pitched our tent and spent our first night on the claim. Shortly after that and before we got our house built we had a severe snow storm. We moved over to a neighbor's claim shack, as she was teaching school in town. I then took the horses to town, came back and there we stayed until the storm passed. This neighbor was Mary Coyle and she afterwards married Jim Wilder.

After the storm was over we got our house built and moved back home and settled down for the winter. We got acquainted with our neighbors, John Cousins, "By Dam" Corrigan, Mr. Perry and family (Indian school teacher), Mr. and Mrs. Brown, who ran the Indian store on the river. We enjoyed many happy evenings playing "High Five" with these fine people. Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Perry and Jessie became very close friends and they were a great help to Jessie. for in June 1913 our first child was born. The little white baby was a great attraction for the girls at the Indian school.



Left to right: Ralph Perry, Mrs. T. H. Doran, Jessie Ilgenfritz, Eulah Perry, and J. H. Perry at the Lower Pine Creek Day School.

I worked at different times for Jesse Brown in his store and Post Office. Also worked for Joy in his grocery store. He also was the undertaker and while he was on vacation it was necessary for me to conduct a funeral. Having had previous experience, I got along all right. I was also called on the first jury held for the district court in Mellette County.

The road west from town to the river was built in 1913. A deep cut was made in the hill and a high grade at the bottom. A man by the name of Beverly Witherpoon was the boss of this project. I worked all through the construction of this road. I believe that, at this time, the road has been changed.

The following is my version of the storm of March 13, 1913.

On March 12, 1913, I went to White River after the mail and a few groceries. Before I started home it began to snow and before I got clear home it was snowing real hard. No wind storm but just snowing hard. During the night we were awakened by the wind. We could not see out but could tell there was a severe storm on.



The next morning, March 13, we could not see our fire guard twenty-five feet from the house. This continued all day long. Just before dark we could first see our fire guard, then the Church, then White River, and finally the little Badlands east of town. This was the most severe storm, or rather one day blizzard, that I ever saw; 1949 was rough but had no one day storm that compared with the storm of March 13, 1913. Many claim shacks, having the so-called car roofs were snowed in, up to the eaves. Snow drifts were still in evidence for a long time.

This was all a very great change from the life we had led before going to Mellette County. Jessie became very homesick, and at times I thought we would not be able to stay it out. I must admit that, at the start, I didn't care too much about homesteading myself.

However, we got acquainted with a lot of nice people in and around White River and the greater part of our stay we enjoyed very much. The thing that appealed to us was the sameness of the people. We were all alike. None of us with Cadillac tastes and the balance Model T. The fact was that we were, most of us, afoot!

Close to fifty years have passed since we were living in Mellette County. For an example of how time has passed, our little baby girl, born to us while we were homesteading, is now a grandmother. That makes Jessie and I great grandmother and grandfather. August 1961, we intend to attend the anniversary in White River, S. D.



Clyde Ilgenfritz, in big white hat, at Burwell, Nebr., rodeo.

Our first and last trips to White River will be quite different. The first one in 1912 took us better than two weeks to make. This one will take four or five hours.

We hope to see some of our old friends at Mellette County's Fiftieth Anniversary. I know that many have gone to their reward but to those of us that are left, it will be wonderful to get together again.

## Homesteading Across The River

By Jessie Ilgenfritz

On June 10, 1912, Clyde Ilgenfritz and I (Jessie Green) were married. The Burwell Tribune carried the story and it added that Mr. and Mrs. Ilgenfritz would be at home to their many friends after July the first at Sargent, Nebr.

We lived in Sargent for three very happy months, and then decided to go onto a homestead that I had drawn the fall before at the last land drawing on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. My number was 829 and I filed on 629 in March 1912.

We left Burwell by covered wagon for South Dakota in September 1912, arriving there on September 17.

We pitched our tent and that is what we lived in until we could build our claim shack. Clyde plowed two fire guards around the house; our first fears were of rattlesnakes and prairie fires, and later the blizzards came.

We had Indians on three sides of us, High Pine to the east, Yellow Fox on the north and Bear Heels on the west.

We were one-half mile from the Little White River, the source of all the water we used. Clyde carried it home in two five-gallon pails every day. It was very

good water and made me think of the water we had in the old well with the oaken buckets. However, after the snows came we had drifts as high as the house. When we ran out of water, we tried melting snow. This proved very satisfactory and Clyde did not need to carry any more water from the river for a long time.

The Indian school, Government Issue Station, Browns Trading Post where the Red Wing Post Office had been located in 1911, were all along the river, as was the dance hall. These were all between the Little White River and the new town named White River that was just getting established up on the flat east of the river.

After we had our house built we moved in and got settled for the winter. My brother, Paul, and my stepfather came up to take the team and wagon back to Burwell. We lived just one and one-half miles west of the town of White River so that we walked back and forth and didn't wish to be burdened with any stock. Besides, we had no shelter or feed for them.

My neighbor to the south was Mary Coyle from O'Neill, Nebr. I had met her at White River in April, when we were there to file on my claim. She was fortunate in finding a place to teach in the White River schools





Ilgenfritz' homesteading in a tent in Mellette County.

so was only out on her homestead over the week-ends. By Dam Corrigan cornered us to the southeast and Mr. Cousins was directly south of him. They brightened our life many an evening by coming over and playing cards. It didn't take long to get acquainted with the Perrys at the Indian School and also the Browns at the Trading Post. Clyde would go to town for the mail and I would stop at one place or the other. We would usually stay for supper and play cards. Sometimes it got too late to go home and so we stayed all night. They had real living quarters with spare rooms. Both families had children older than Clyde and I, but they were young in spirit and I know they were my salvation. Both of them had lived on the Indian Reservation for years.

The Indians had a dance hall built out of logs down by the river. There they would dance all night before they got their Beef Issue the next day. Eight head of cattle were slaughtered the first and fifteenth of each month. A certain number of pounds per person in each family, was given to them at this time. The Indians would come in the day before the Issue date, pitch their tents along the Little White River and remain until the day after.

Mr. and Mrs. Perry, teachers at the Indian School, took us to our first dance there. This was a very large dance hall, said to be the largest on the Reservation, built of logs. It was built in an octagon shape with a flag pole going up through the center and at the base of the flag pole was a large kettle of dog soup. There were tin cups hanging on the pole so they could go and drink soup whenever they wanted it. The Bucks and Squaws were dressed in their beaded buckskin costumes. Some of the women wore black dresses covered with elk's teeth that were said to cost as much as a thousand dollars. Many of the beautiful beaded costumes took much skill and several years to make.

The Bucks would sit on the benches around the wall smoking their pipes, while the Squaws would sit on the ground in a circle, smoking cigarettes. They all had their faces painted, mostly with bright red and blue paint. It was a weird sight. I was really afraid at first and kept close to the Perrys. It wasn't long until a big Buck came over and motioned for me to go into the circle and dance with them. The Squaws sitting on the floor would poke you in back of your knee with a stick to make you bend your knees more. This went on until Clyde gave them a quarter to let me out. (Indians dance around in a circle, individually instead of in couples. They have a special dance step that they use and this was what they were trying to teach her. W. R.)

The Indians held a council and gave me an Indian name: "O'Yata Wash Ta"—meaning Her Good Nation. That cost Clyde another dollar. They called Clyde "Sharp Prairie Chicken," or "Tall White Man." We later learned that they were afraid of the Tall White Man, and here we were afraid of them at first. One time when we were on our way to town we met Running Bird, an old Indian who had fought in the Battle of Wounded Knee. He admired my furs and wanted to know, "how much," but I did not want to sell them. They were a lovely mink cape and muff set that my folks had given to me the Christmas before. So we pretended we didn't understand him. He couldn't speak English and tried sign language to get us to sell them. From then on, Running Bird was a regular visitor at Issue time and he hobbled his horses out on our claim.

To cross the Little White River to go to town we had to use a swinging bridge. It was one that Mr. Perry and the Indians had built for the Indian children to cross the river to go to school. It was rather high and shaky and hard to walk on, but safe.

One time we packed two suitcases to save what we could when a prairie fire was coming our way. We were ready to run if necessary but Rev. Fred Stoezel, the minister who married us, was visiting his sister (who was homesteading about four miles south of us) and he got some men together. They went out and plowed a fire guard ahead of the fire and stopped it from coming our way. There were a lot of fires that fall, but that was the only one that gave us such a scare.

Clyde worked in a store for Mr. Joy. Later on he worked in Jesse Brown's store and post office. It was a very busy place when the Indians got their paycheck from the Government. Sometimes I would go into town and stay with Meda Brown while Clyde would work in the store. Meda was such a likeable person, coming from St. Paul, Minn. She was about my age and they had one son, Raleigh, about two years old, but the next fall twin boys were born, on Hallowe'en night, as I remember it.

We went to a lot of dances for the white people, too, in White River, where we met the homesteaders that came in from miles around. We walked wherever we went. In 1912-1913 there were very few cars, and the few that could afford them had to drive them over trails meant for horses.

On March 13, 1913, we experienced the worst blizzard



Jessie Ilgenfritz, 1958, librarian at Burwell, Nebr.



we ever went through. It raged one afternoon, throughout the night and all the next day. You did not dare open the door and you could not see out because of the white blanket of snow against the windows. We had plenty of food, water and fuel, also no livestock to take care of, so we got along all right, but it was some time before Clyde had a path shoveled so I could walk as far as the river.

I went back to Burwell in April. We took the stage to Rosebud, then on to Valentine, Nebr., where we could take a train.

On June 3, 1913, our daughter, Virginia Catherine Ilgenfritz, was born. She was born in my old Burwell home. The closest hospital was at Grand Island, ninety miles away, and that was for surgery only, as no one ever heard of going to a hospital in those days just to have a baby.

In September, my step-brother took Virginia and me back to the little old shack on the prairies. The Indians were crazy about Virginia and they named her "Little Blue Bird Woman."

In October, my mother came up to see us and met our many friends, Browns, Perrys and Jones families, who all invited us in for a day while she was with us, and we also took her to an Indian dance. Virginia's food



Ilgenfritz home in Nebraska, 1961.

did not seem to agree with her, so when mama left for Burwell, she took Virginia with her so she could have some good old Jersey milk.

We were proving up on our claim in December and now we were busy getting our things packed and getting ready to leave our little home. All of our friends gave parties for us. They would have me come and stay all day at their homes during those last weeks before we left Mellette County.

So we bid farewell to our many new-made friends on that crisp December morning when we left by stagecoach and train for Burwell, Nebr., which is still our home.

\* \* \*

#### Postscript by Winifred Reutter:

Mrs. Ilgenfritz also told me a very cute story about an incident that happened out here in the early days. As I have had trouble figuring out how to pronounce their name, I can appreciate it very much.

Mrs. Ilgenfritz was glad to hear that Doctor Estelle Wise is planning to write about her experiences in Mellette County. She says, "When we left White River to go back to Nebraska, we rode on the stage as far as Rosebud with Stella; she was a secretary to Mr. Scrivens, the allotting agent at Rosebud, staying with them at their home, and she took me up to their place where we waited for the stage to go to Valentine, Nebr. I also remember Mrs. Chris Anders, who was a Powers girl, and a niece of Mrs. Brown. I especially remember the first ladies aid meeting I went to. It was held at the Indian School with Mrs. Perry. Clyde took me down to Brown's store on the river and Mr. Brown took Mrs. Brown and Viola Cummings, their daughter and me in the car over to Perrys. I was new in the group and our name had them all stumped. Mrs. Hattie Anders was president of the aid so Viola first introduced me to her. Hattie said she didn't think she could pronounce my name. Viola said, 'Just think of an Elgin watch and add Fritz to it.' So when the next group came, Mrs. Anders said she wanted them all to meet 'Mrs. Ingersoll!'"

Mrs. Ilgenfritz said that everyone laughed, and no wonder; it was a good joke.

## The Kaufman Story

By Blanche Kaufman

I was Blanche Cannon when I first came to South Dakota in March 1914. I had a two-week's vacation from school at that time so decided to spend it visiting my brothers, who at that time lived near Iona, S. D. I was definitely a tenderfoot, but my breaking to the ways of the West soon started. The Western stagecoach which I had pictured in my mind, actually turned out to be an old spring wagon. The road and prairie were about what I had imagined. My traveling companions were two men; I think now that they were both politicians. I know one of them; Bartine became Judge Bartine later on. During the trip he read a letter from an Indian out at Cutmeat, asking for a beef, as the Indians wanted to put on a feed for a political meeting. Little did I dream that I would some day be in Cutmeat myself and living among the Indians.

About half-way between Ocoma and Iona we stopped

at a ranch. There the driver caught up a different team of horses, changed the harnesses over to them, hitched up and we were on our way again. The men were complaining about the cold, but to me the change from the damp, cold air that I was accustomed to, to the dry, cold South Dakota air was exhilarating.

Mrs. Bond was running the Iona hotel and there we had a good hot meal. I had not told my brothers I was coming, so had to hire a team to get out to Clyde's place. Needless to say it was a surprise. In fact, it was quite a surprise, since it was not generally known that the Cannon boys even had a sister. One young cowboy was so surprised that he fell off of his chair in Danforth's store.

I went back to Iowa, finished my school year and then returned to South Dakota to stay. To a rather shy, reserved young girl, the change from the rather restricted conditions which are usually found in older communi-



ties to the open-handed, outgoing attitude of those pioneers was positively fascinating. One forgot the hardships, inconveniences and lack of comforts. Any social affair was welcome so we had a "Bachelor Quilting Party" during my first visit. All the neighbors came. The men brought needles along (some of their needles were almost as big as spikes), and they tied two comforters that evening. Of course a dance followed. I had never danced before.

I had never ridden on horseback either, so that was the first thing I had to learn. In spite of being bucked off any number of times, having horses fall and throwing me over their heads, stepping on my feet and various other accidents, I practically lived on horseback for several years.

Eventually I was asked to come to Todd County to help organize the rural schools which brought me to Cutmeat. I taught in one room of the Ries house while the school was being built. It was there that I met my future husband, Gus Kaufman.

Gus and I decided to be married in June 1919. After school was out, I went back to Iowa to see my dad and do some shopping. I was on the train coming back to South Dakota, on Decoration Day, when it began to rain. For the next three or four days it just poured. When I reached Oacoma it was still pouring and the stage wasn't running. I stayed overnight there; still no stage. I found out there was a farmer in town with a team who was going in the direction that I wanted to go. It took us all day to reach his home. The creek which ran by his farm was out of its banks and it was impossible to cross. So I spent that night with this family. By the next day a horsebacker crossed the creek and got word to my brother who was working at the Loyson Troth ranch. Clyde came for me with a team and we spent the night at Troths'. The next day was to be my wedding day and here I was still surrounded by mud some fifteen or twenty miles from the Russell ranch where the wedding was supposed to be held.

The next morning the rain had stopped and we started out. In the meantime Gus had been having his share of difficulties too. Having no car of his own he had arrangements with his neighbor, John Quick Bear, who had a good Model T, to take him to Hamill and Russell's ranch. The night before they were to go, Gus went over to see John and he was gone. No one knew where he was. By night Gus was frantic, so he went to Kiasers and made arrangements for one of the boys to take him.

Sometime during the night John Quick Bear came, woke up Gus and said he was ready to go. Now, Gus had two cars spoken for! They started out, trying to get to Kiasers before they left, but met Bob on the road. Eventually they got to Winner, where Gus called Russells and asked to talk to me. Russell said I wasn't there, and besides they didn't know where I was. That was quite a blow and Gus didn't know whether he should go back home or go on. However, he took a chance and by the time he arrived, Clyde and I were also there.

Next day—THE DAY—everything worked out just fine, in spite of rain. Clyde and Gus went to Winner, got the license and met the minister at the train. We had a very nice wedding. Gus' sister Anna was bridesmaid and Clyde was Gus' attendant. The bride's bouquet never arrived in time as the railroad bridge had washed out.

The next day it was pouring rain again when we started for Norris. We took the minister to Winner so

he could board the train, then we started out through the rain and gumbo. It was night when we reached O'Kreek and something had happened to the car. We couldn't get it fixed until morning. There was no hotel but John scouted around and found a place where we could have shelter for the night. It was a sort of lean-to on the side of a house. At least it was a roof over our heads. There was no light, and few people had flashlights then so we stumbled around in the dark until we found an old bed spring on the floor. No bedding except what we had with us but the place was dry for which we were very thankful. We tried to get some rest. Presently, Anna, who was with us, heard a strange sound which frightened her. Soon we heard it again, C—r-r-r-c-c and then a scratching sound. When we couldn't figure it out we lit some matches and looked around. There in part of the room were boxes with setting hens in them!!

Well, we all roosted there until morning, then our car was fixed and the sun was shining as we headed for our little shack on the prairie.

We are still there although the little shack, long ago, became a granary.

Now to give you a story about Gus and how he happened to come to Mellette County.

August Kaufman, father of A. C. (Gus) and Henry Kaufman came to America in 1871. He came by sailing ship and it took him three months to cross the ocean. During the trip the ship was hit by a bad storm. The wind was so strong that the mast was broken, which of course disabled the ship. They sighted another ship and signaled for help. The other ship, immediately changed course and went around them, evidently afraid of pirates.

Somehow they managed to repair the mast and reach port without help. Mr. Kaufman went to Chicago. This was just after the great Chicago fire. Being a stone mason by trade he found plenty of work to do. He stayed in Chicago about a year and then went west.

They came to Yankton, S. D., and homesteaded there, about three miles northwest of where the State hospital now stands. While at Yankton he worked with a wagon train hauling freight to Deadwood, crossing the river at Ft. Pierre. He also worked with a surveyor named Van Antwert when he was surveying around Lake Kampeska.

At Yankton he met and married a young Swiss girl, Mary Ries, who was working in a cafe there. She had come over with her parents on a steam ship. It had taken them just three weeks to cross the ocean.

A few years later the Kaufman and Ries families decided to pioneer again so they all went up to Freeman, S. D., and bought some land. Later the Kaufmans moved to a farm near Delmont where they spent the rest of their lives. They raised a family of eleven children, three of them came West. William homesteaded at Faith, S. D., in 1910 when the railroad was built out there. A. C. and Henry came to Mellette County.

On October 9, 1913, A. C. (Gus) Kaufman filed on a Mellette County homestead near Surprise Valley. His brother, Henry, filed on adjoining land. They planned on shipping a car to Belvidere from Delmont in the spring.

When they were loading the car, the depot agent informed them that the bridge had washed out at Chamberlain, S. D., (a yearly occurrence at that time) so they had to change their plans, and ship north to Hur-





**Kaufman Brothers. Left to right: Henry, Otto and Gus (A. C.).**

on, S. D., then west to Midland, S. D. They bought three horses, three cows, a plow, lumber for their shacks and various other things. In order to unload quickly they hauled the stuff to a place near Midland. A friend of their parents, named Niedan, owned this place. The next day they moved everything over to the home of a complete stranger named Reiman, who agreed to take care of the cows. This was about five miles north of Stamford.

The next day it was so foggy the men were afraid to go anywhere lest they get lost. Around noon the fog cleared, so while Henry finished picking up the odds and ends, Gus took a horse and buggy and headed for an Uncle's place down in Todd County near Cutmeat. That afternoon he got as far as the Jess Beckwith place. This place later became the location of the first Cedarbutte Post Office. They kept him over night and the next day he reached his Uncle's place.

The uncle, Pete Ries, and neighbor Beuchler, took three wagons and went to help with the hauling. While they were hauling the freight from north of Stamford in the wagons, Gus started on foot, driving the three cows. The first night he got as far as the Schamber store. A local minister, whose name he has forgotten, kept him overnight. Next morning when Gus reached the river it was covered with a thin layer of ice and the cows refused to go into it. Finally a man on horseback came along and he drove the cows across and also took Gus across the river. Gus and the cows walked the rest of the way to the homestead that night. Meanwhile the wagons arrived and were unloaded.

The first thing to be accomplished was to build a shack. That done, the hunt for water began. They dug several holes by hand but no water was found. The last hole was six foot across and sixty-foot deep. All dug by hand with a pick and shovel and pulled up with a bucket. When they had to stop, they put a fence around the hole. One day a frightened calf jumped the fence and landed in the bottom of the dry hole. After that they filled it up. Quite a grave for a calf! So they had to haul their drinking water from the Looking White spring. Gus' shack was 12x16, which was somewhat larger than most of the shacks of that time. It was unfinished inside so was plenty cold. One night the boys thought it was very cold so they covered their heads with the blankets. When they awoke the next morning and lifted the covers the snow fell down their necks. The door had blown open during the night and the shack was half full of snow.

During the early years we depended on the Black Pipe Creek for stock water but since the drouth years,

the creek stops running during part of the summer. We have four wells on the place now so we never lack water.

Occasionally we had too much water. Once in the twenties we had a cloud burst and the water came down from the hill so fast it went right across the yard by the house. It ran into the cellar until the cellar was full. The jars of canned goods were half buried in silt while cans and light weight things were floating on top and we could hear them bumping on the floor joists underneath the house.

The creek had been so high a couple of times that the bridge washed out. I remember one of those times. Two planks had been laid across the pilings, so everyone slowed down and drove very carefully to cross on these planks. One day, when I had a bunch of children in the truck, something went wrong and I couldn't slow down. I came down the hill and across the planks about forty miles an hour. Fortunately I stayed on the planks. Six inches either way would have dumped the whole outfit into the creek. After crossing, the truck stalled and had to be pulled home.

In 1918 Gus and Henry bought a half section of land near Norris from Reuben Quick Bear and moved their shacks to it. Gus had proved up on his claim in October 1918. At the present time those homesteads are part of the Carr ranch in Surprise Valley. Henry Kaufman lived on his quarter of Quick Bear land until 1947 when ill health caused him to leave the farm and move to Valentine, Nebr. He passed away in 1948. Herbert Waacks now own that land and live on it.

The A. C. Kaufmans set up housekeeping on the Quick Bear land in 1919 and we still live there.

That was the winter of the heavy snow. On October 16, 1919, it began to snow. When it stopped two days later, there was about a foot of snow where it lay on the level but most of it was piled in drifts as high as the barn. On November 6, a blizzard struck which lasted about two days. That was followed by snow storms every few days for a couple of weeks and that snow never went off enough so the cattle could graze, until in May.

Gus' original three cows had grown to a little herd of thirty head. But because of the early snow cover that stayed on so long, everyone ran out of hay. By calving time the cows were so poor and weak and couldn't give much milk so that many calves starved to death although they were running with their mothers. Many of the cows were too weak to get up so Gus rigged up a derrick. Every morning he and his wife would drag that outfit around the place, lift the cows up and stand them on their feet. In spite of their efforts they lost thirteen of the thirty cattle and most of the calves. The same thing was true with all of the neighbors' stock, because of the long hard winter.



**Gus Kaufman's homestead shack—A. C. Kaufman, Jim John, (Not Known), Henry Kaufman, George Christensen, Karl Huber, and Fred Kaufman in front of it.**



In spite of the snow, blizzards, hail, grasshoppers, the drouth and everything else, some of the old homesteaders are still sticking with Mellette County and prospering.

The young people who read this book may wonder what the homesteaders did for entertainment during the early days of Mellette County. Well, we had no radios, T-V's, movies, fast cars, good roads or telephones in the country. But there was always something to look forward to. Often it was a dance at the house of one of the neighbors. They set most of the furniture (there wasn't much) outside, to make room in the little 10 x 12 shack for the dancers. If there happened to be another room, the babies and small children were parked in there. Usually there was someone in the crowd who was able to play a fiddle, banjo or accordion. If nothing else was available, a mouth harp or a comb would serve the purpose. Once in a while there was even a reed organ and someone who could chord on it. Each family brought along a cake and sandwiches for midnight lunch and the host furnished coffee.

Sometimes it was a pie social or box supper held at the local school house. How the girls worked to fix the nicest food that their limited supply would allow. And they worked in secret to make their boxes look as beautiful as possible; and how they hoped that the young man of their dreams would buy their box when it was auctioned off after the program. And sometimes, how disappointed they were when the most unkempt old bachelor in the neighborhood bought it.

Sometimes it was only a program at the school house. The children would speak pieces, the older ones clearly, and the little ones shyly, lisping because of missing teeth. Little plays would also be put on, usually accompanied by a lot of giggling, confusion and prompting from behind the curtains. Sometimes there would be dates, spelling bees and ciphering down. If it was a moonlight night, games were played by the young folks, such as "Skip to My Lou," "Blind Man's Bluff," "Drop the Handkerchief," "Farmer in the Dell," "Ruth and Jacob," and many other games.

We had neighborhood dances at Tom Berry's once or twice a year. When Tom's had a dance everyone went. They lived in a log house but it was a large one. I remember there was even a room to put the babies and small children in.

People who had children would put some hay in the wagon box, put quilts on top for the children to ride on. If the weather was cold there might be some hot stones or a foot warmer used. Mom and Pop, with the youngest baby, would occupy the spring seat and away they would go. Younger couples came on horseback, mostly, although once in a while a top buggy would be seen. Some folks rode as much as 20 miles to get there. When the sun came up in the morning they would all be riding home.

One time in the early twenties, Toms' had a dance. By that time quite a few cars were in use. There was a creek between the house and the road that was high and out of its banks. No one wanted to drive through the water, lest the ignition get wet and stall them midstream. So Tom sent his team and wagon to haul us all across. Some of us had wet feet when we reached the house but we didn't mind that. He refused to take us back until the water went down enough so it wouldn't run into the wagon box, so we danced until daylight. Then we packed our sleeping babies into the wagon again and got safely across the creek. When we reached

the road the sun was just peeking over the Badlands, and a wonderful time was had by all.

Card parties were another source of entertainment. In the summer there were always baseball games. Every little community had its team and there was some hot rivalry between them. Sometimes the fans got into the act. The competition was keen. The ball club from Norris played against Belvidere, White River, Parmelee, Cedarbutte and others.

Some of the Indians were very good ball players but time meant nothing to them. So, to be sure that his boys would be on hand at game time, Gus Kaufman would provide a lunch for them before the game. Usually all he could afford was crackers and bologna, but it got them there on time.

Usually a collection was taken at the games to help pay for the balls, etc. This was divided fifty - fifty, or sixty - forty. When any group refused to split the purse the boys would not go back there again.

I remember they played White River at an Indian celebration north of Norris one year. I believe that was the same year that Andrew Good Thunder's son's body was returned from overseas. A military funeral was held for him on the Fourth of July, 1922. A large crowd was there. He was buried in the cemetery on the hill west of the road by St. Paul's church.

This is the line-up for a game in 1921, copied from some old score cards (the score, Norris 9, Cutmeat 12):

Norris: Levi Quick Bear, 3B; John Quick Bear, 1B; Tom Quiver, RF; Joe Henry, 2B; John Kilber, LF; Ernest Quick Bear, SS; Gus Kaufman, P; Ed Eagle Bear, C; Emmett Eagle Bear, CF.

Cutmeat: John Whipple, 3B; George Howard, 1B; Wesley, P; George Craven, SS; Bob Emery, 2B; Moccasinface, LF; No Moccasin, C; A. Whipple, CF; Brave Hawk, RF.

This game was a year or two later (the score, Norris 16, Cedarbutte 5):

Norris: John Kilber, C; D. Holcomb, 1B; O. Grass; Grenough; Joe Quick Bear, 3B; G. Kaufman, 2B; C. Quick Bear; Putnam; Ernest Quick Bear, SS.

Cedarbutte: O. Hutcheson, P; H. A. White, C; A. VanLier, 1B; W. H. Starkjohann, 2B; E. Samuelson, 3B; A. A. Beard, SS; Stewart Phillips, RF; E. Patnoe, CF; C. Patnoe, LF.

There were a lot of community activities around Norris such as picnics, various clubs, fishing and hunting parties. All we needed was for someone to say, "Let's go fishing," and the crowd was ready to go. Once we went east of Norris after sunfish. We all got stuck in the mud, so everyone got out and the men picked up the cars, set them on dry land (of course they were Fords) and on our way we went.

One Sunday we went to Ironwood Dam to fish, but all we caught was a big turtle. Mrs. Jim John volunteered to cook it if the others would agree to eat it. They agreed, but none of them had ever eaten turtle, so after it was cooked they all chickened out.

The Hodson, Kaufman, Novak, Putnam, Martin and other families went to Sawmill Canyon to fish. I don't remember much about the fishing but I remember we found the most wonderful black raspberry patch. We picked quarts of them. On the way home we stopped at the Little White River bridge and went swimming. Then we all wound up at Hodsons' for raspberry shortcake.

Fishing was usually good in the Sandhill Lakes south of Patricia and Tuthill. One year, Ray Briggs had a new truck, so he took all who could pile into the truck, men,



Early  
Pictures  
Of  
Norris,  
S. Dak.



Early Baseball Game



Building, first Cedarbutte P.O. and store.  
Jess Beckwith, first postmaster, by chimney.



Otto Jorgensen Shack



Chief Little Chief, his home and family.



Henry Kaufman Shack



Norris postmaster, P. H. Putnam, wife and son, by  
their car. Henry Kaufman, right, and another friend.



women and children. Those who couldn't get in the truck came in cars. The sand was very dry and Ray tried to barrel right through it. Of course we got stuck in the sand while the lighter cars that were driving slowly went right through. With the help of man-power and shovels we got out. Fishing was very good and we fried enough fish to feed the crowd.

Most all of the people in the Norris community went to a Sunday School picnic at Rosebud Falls one time. About a half mile before we reached the Falls we had to go down a very long steep hill. It was just an old wagon trail, very crooked and steep. We had to drive carefully and slowly. The lead car was doing fine until the brakes gave out on John Allard's car. It went tearing down the hill and ran into Henry Kaufman's car. The next car stopped alright but the men had to run up the hill to warn the others. Mr. Manion had just started down and had a bit of trouble getting stopped. After that only one car went down at a time. Some of the women and children were screaming and everyone was terribly excited. Our cars were not badly damaged and were soon back on the trail. It was a beautiful location for a picnic, lots of trees, a nice stream of water for swimming and such a pretty waterfall. Someone discovered that a cave had been washed out behind the falls and they had lots of fun ducking through the falls into the cave.

One of the biggest outings we had was when a group from Norris went to "Sitting Up Dam" for a camp out one weekend. Tents, blankets, stoves, food, babies, fish poles, shotguns, cooking equipment, etc., etc., were packed in trucks and cars and we headed for Sitting Up Dam one Saturday afternoon. By the time we got there and had camp set up it was dark, so we stumbled around with our kerosene lanterns trying to prepare supper. Most of the food had been prepared at home so we built a campfire and put the coffee on to boil while we unpacked. By the time the dishes were cleaned up, some wit had decided that because it was Sitting Up Dam everyone had to sit up all night. Also, if anyone was found sleeping they should be immediately awakened. This worked fine until after midnight, then every little while someone would be missed and a search party sent out.

Joe Williams was found sleeping under the seat of a Ford Coupe. Someone started the car and drove around over the sand dunes until Joe was glad to sit up. Hodson was sleeping in his tent and the women decided to pull the tent down. Unfortunately they started working on the peg that was right by his head. After the startled man spoke his piece, the women decided to leave that tent alone.

Around midnight there was a bright moon and someone spotted a movement over beyond some sand hills. Soon a white figure could be seen flitting across and around the dunes. In five minutes everyone was wide awake and some were quite startled. Soon a chase started and when the apparition was finally captured it turned out to be a Kaufman kid from Delmont, S. D., who had borrowed his sister's dress and a sheet.

Next morning, Mrs. Jonason scrambled at least half a case of eggs while others fried pan after pan of bacon. Some started to make toast but a thunderstorm was building up so we finished the pie and cake that were left over from supper.

That day we drove to Eagle Nest Butte which we climbed as one of our adventures during a busy day. Among those families who were on this trip were O. A. Hodson, Dave Hougham, Wallace Wilkinson, Alex Whip-

ple, Ray Phillips, Alva Putnam, Les Martin, Otto Kaufman, A. C. Kaufman, Jonason, J. H. Johns, Ross, Joe Williams and Fred Kaufman.

It was a weary bunch that pulled into Norris that evening but we had added many happy memories to our memory book.

Fourth of July was always a big day. Everyone was up early, and chores done quickly so everyone could go to the celebration. The Fourth always seemed to be the hottest day of the summer. The bright sun in a brilliant blue sky had you dripping perspiration before the chores were done. A basket of lunch was packed. A big chunk of ice was brought from the ice house and wrapped in a sack, and the makings for ice cream were packed in another box. Finally we are ready and it seems like the horses never were so slow, but we arrive at some picnic spot, and your neighbors are arriving there, too.

Some of the men pounded the ice, others turned the freezer crank while still others rigged up tables with boards hauled for that purpose. The women set out the food while others spread blankets on the ground for the babies. The children scattered to the four winds. Tommy fell and skinned his knee. Susie snagged and tore her new dress. Sammy and Billie are fighting over their stick horses, Jane climbed a tree and now can't get down. Bob has found a little garter snake and wants to bring it to the picnic to show to the girls!

In spite of everything a most delicious dinner is soon on the table and everyone overeats on stacks of fried chicken, potato salad, baked beans, home cured ham, home made bread and butter, all sorts of pickles and relishes, with coffee and real lemonade, topped off with two pieces of pie. The ice cream and cake will just have to wait until midafternoon.

Then the mothers gather up the dishes and cover the food away from the flies. We had no refrigeration but we never heard of food poisoning in those days.

We all get ready for the afternoon program. A flag has been raised and near it some visiting dignitary, or whoever is available, makes a speech. In it our country is lauded, our heroes acclaimed, the real meaning of the Fourth of July explained and a fervent prayer is expressed that the liberty for which our forefathers fought shall not be forgotten and that these United States of America shall stand as a guiding light to all the world. May God grant it.

After the patriotic portion of the program was over there was a ball game, either between two teams picked from the crowd, or if they were fortunate enough to have a visiting team from a neighboring community, so much the better. There were no Babe Ruths or Mickey Mantles on those teams but the fans were just as enthusiastic and feeling ran just as high as though the pennant, itself, was at stake.

We have a family of three children, two girls, Charity and Betty, and one boy, James. Two of them live near us but Betty lives in Boulder, Colo. There are eight grandchildren.

My brothers, Clyde and Joe Cannon, after serving in the Army during World War I, also came to Mellette County. Both did some farming at first but Clyde later bought the Norris Garage which he operated until 1954. He passed away in the spring of 1955.

Joe still farms near Norris. He did considerable carpentering during the time when this community was building up. He built or helped build many of the buildings in Norris. He served as Mellette County treasurer and also in the Tax Department in Pierre. His main hobby is fishing, especially paddle fish.



# Charlie Kerlin Of 909 Ranch

By Richard Kerlin

Within two months of the establishment of Mellette County, S. D., Charles Wesley Kerlin (then of Omaha, Nebr.) had registered for homestead land there, and made his first entry, dated October 15, 1911, in his "909 Ranch Journal." The simple, straight forward records of expenses and receipts, with their dates and descriptions in Charlie Kerlin's neat bookkeeping hand tell the story of one early pioneer's trials and triumphs, as he came to a new country, learned, built, worked, and shared his humor, love of life and nature, and his thoughtful philosophy with his neighbors of nearby claims.

After the last entry in his own Journal, May 30, 1914, he became too busy making entries in the Mellette County Court House as County Auditor and County Treasurer to continue this memorable record. Later, as the "Watchdog of Mellette County" found his wife (with the aid of a rattlesnake!) and raised three children, the 909 Ranch Journal was put aside along with his Homesteader's Map of Mellette County and prairie snapshots and newspaper clippings, as mementoes of a time too soon passed by. That time is not forgotten, though followed by busy progress—autos, radios, airplanes, combines, television, jets, atomic power and space rockets—and separated from us today by two World Wars.

Looking at some of those 909 Ranch Journal entries, one can't help comparing them to 1961's \$300 TV's, \$2000 to \$3000 cars, \$15,000 homes and multi-million dollar space probes:

EXPENSES: Oct. 15, 1911—Registration fee, 25c. Paid W. Wheeler for registration, \$2.00. Apr. 13, 1912—Money order for seeds, 5c. Apr. 26—Car fare, Omaha to Winner, \$6.55. Apr. 28—Auto, Winner to White River, \$5.00. Apr. 28—Livery to see land, \$1.75. Apr. 29—Affidavit 25c. Apr. 29—Locator's fee, Sjoblom & Nolan, \$25.00. Apr. 30—Auto, White River to Winner, \$5.00. Apr. 30—Locating N. W. quarter, Sec. 20-41-27, \$2.00. May 1—Car fare, Winner to Omaha, \$6.55. May 2—Money order, 1st payment on land, 25c. May 3—Compass, \$1.00. May 7—1 Second Hand Tent 10x12, \$7.50. May 7—1 Ball Twine, 20c. May 7—Drayage on Water Barrel, 50c. May 18—Book, "Treatise on Steel Square," \$1.00. May 21—Hauling trunk to depot (Omaha), 75c. May 22—Car fare, Omaha to Winner, \$6.53. May 23—Car fare, Winner to Colome, 35c. May 23—Car fare, Colome to Winner, 35c. May 24—Car fare, Winner to Colome & return, 70c. May 24—Livery, looking for team, \$3.50. May 24—Fire wood, \$1.50. May 25—Delivering team in Winner, \$2.00. May 29—Livery, feed for horses, \$5.50. May 27—Rock Salt, 20c. May 27—Axle Grease, 25c.

After more Expense entries in May 1912 for nails, clothesline, clothespins, 3-in-1 oil and rope, an emergency arose: "June 15, 1912—Telephone to Witten, a/c horse, 25c. June 16—Hotel, Carter, a/c horse \$1.00. June 16—Reward for finding horse, \$3.00."

Undoubtedly this led immediately to starting another section in the 909 Ranch Journal: "FENCES: July 19, 1912—100 lbs. Barb Wire, at \$3.75, \$3.75. July 19—Staples 5c. July 23—8 Heavy Ash Posts, at 13c, \$1.05. July 29-31—43 Ash Posts (20 trees cut by self) at 10c, \$2.00. Aug. 10—5 Spools Wire 552 ft. at \$3.60, \$19.87. Aug. 10—5 lbs. Staples, 25c. Aug. 14—15 Native Red Cedar, 160 Ash & Oak Posts, \$13.00."

This fencing continued with entries through May 24, 1914, in the Journal, but there was more fencing and fence repairs for years after that—as every homesteader knows.

Meanwhile, another side of Charlie Kerlin shows under "SEEDS: Apr. 13, 1912—Seeds from Henry Field, \$4.20. May 8—2-oz. onion seed, 30c. May 8—Pansy seed, 10c. May 27—1 peck seed corn, 90c."

These and later entries through 1914 alternating between vegetable, grain and flower seeds and plants show his characteristic love for flowers mixed in with the practical need for staples and food crops and an occasional spicy item like the onions he was noted for raising. Bulbs and plants he bought in April 19, 1913, and later ones started in White River in 1922 and 1923 have had their descendents transplanted to Nebraska, and from there to California and Missouri, where his children and grandchildren now grow and enjoy iris and peonies he started in Mellette County!

Larger entries appear under LIVESTOCK:

"May 25, 1912—2 Horses, Ole & Charlie, \$225.00. July 1, 1913—Traded 1 Horse, Ole, to Oscar Ingraham, in return for 25 acres breaking, at \$4.00 per acre, \$100.00."

And under REAL ESTATE: May 2, 1912—Receiver Public Moneys, Chamberlain, S. D., 160 acres at \$1.50 per acre, First one-fifth payment on land, \$48.00. May 2—Filing Fees, \$14.00. June 1-5—Breaking 2 acres by self at \$4.00 per acre, \$8.00. Apr. 9, 1913—Discing & plowing 2 acres, O. Ingraham, \$5.00. Aug. 22—Bal. four-fifths due on land, \$192.00. Aug. 22—Fees on proving up, \$9.85. Aug. 22—Proof of Publication, \$6.00. Sept. 20—Breaking Fireguard (onions), O. Ingraham, \$1.20. July 1—Breaking 25 acres at \$4.00 per (Traded Ole) \$100.00. Total \$384.05."

Other entries reveal that Charlie Kerlin was busy buying tools in Omaha from May 3 to 11, 1912. A two-foot square he bought then for 60c is owned now by his son, who used it to build an addition to his carport for his home in St. Louis. His son also has that old book, "Treatise on the Steel Square," and the very first tool item in the Journal—a 35c round double-grit carborundum stone.

May 25-27, 1912, found Charlie in Winner S. D., buying a set of work harness for \$40, a wagon for \$25 and a Blue Jay Breaking Plow for \$8, along with curry comb, files and other tools. A wire stretcher bought then saw use for many years after on the claim. The hatchet he bought in Nov. 16, 1912, for 53c was sold by entry of Jan. 9, 1914, to Fritz Lyon for 50c. The wagon was sold to O. Ingraham on Sept. 24, 1913.

Charlie didn't neglect a complete set of cooking utensils and dishes, either. These ran from 1 pancake turner for 3c and 1 egg beater for 10c all the way to a 3-burner kerosene oil stove, Perfection No. 2 for \$9.50 and 1 portable oven, \$1.25—not forgetting 1 toothpick holder, 25c. While on the claim, among many other items he added one 4-hole cook stove for \$7.35. Later money came back: "Oct. 26, 1912—Sold dishes to F. Lyon, \$1.50. Mar. 7, 1913—Sold 1 oatmeal bowl, F. Lyon, 10c. Apr. 9, 1913—Sold 1 pie plate to F. Lyon, 10c."

The pie plate along with the Nov. 16, 1912—rolling pin, 10c, may be what led to Charlie Kerlin winning first prize for the best pumpkin pie, and to Fritz Lyon



for the best mince pie, at the first annual Mellette County Fair in Wood September 5-6, 1913!

Perhaps encouraged by this success, we find Fritz buying from Charlie a long list of dishes and utensils on Jan. 9, 1914, including the egg beater which now went for only 5c, and even the tea kettle for 50c. For reasons unknown the cook stove was sold to Homer Wilson, for \$7.00. And the 2-gallon stone crock Charlie bought in 1913 may be the one in which he kneaded the dough for his first trial loaf of bachelor's bread, the one he said rose with the gas all in the center, baked into a hollow loaf with a crust so hard it turned his knife, and which he found a dog gnawing on without success a week later where he had thrown it out.

Although Charlie spent \$64.85 for lumber for his house on September 6, 1912, and bought various items of nails, hinges, tar paper, blue plaster board and more lumber and paint up to Mar. 18, 1914, for a grand total for house and barn amounting to \$149.03, his needs were small for Furniture: "May 8, 1912—Sanitary Couch, \$5.75. May 8—Mattress, \$4.50. May 9—Mirror, 18c. May 27—Boards for Table, \$1.25. June 22—1 1x12x14" Y. P. Fin., Bench, 75c. Mar. 8, 1914—1 12x15 Plate Looking Glass, 45c."

Anyone who has had the car fixed or hired any kind of work done lately knows that labor comes high these days. Look at what a man's hard work was worth in 1912 to 1914, along with the cost of horsepower:

"Aug. 31, 1912—Digging cellar for house, F. Lyon, \$3.00. Dec. 31—33- $\frac{3}{4}$  hrs. carpenter work, O. Ingraham @ 25c per hr., \$8.44. June 30, 1913—Using horse 5 days at 50c, W. J. Palmer, \$2.50. Sept. 24—44 hrs. road work at 20c, County warrant, \$8.80. Sept. 29—13 days using horse on road work at 50c, \$6.50."

Wells were a necessity of life and early ones cost Charlie: "June 21, 1912—1 20-ft. dry hole at 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ c ft., \$7.50. June 21—1 26-ft. dry hole at 37c ft., \$9.75. June 21—1 32-ft. Well at 75c ft., \$24.00. June 21—Tubing for 32-

ft. Well, \$8.25. June 22—1 Wheel for well bucket, 40c. June 22—1 Well bucket, 75c. June 22—40-ft. five-eighths" rope, \$1.15. July 16—1 60' Well at 75c ft., \$45.00; Less Discount a/c 32' well going dry (-10.25). Less a/c F. Lyons well, (-2.00); Tubing for 32' Well, \$11.25."

Produce helped pay for some of the cost of feed and grocery staples and he sold his first vegetables on May 31, 1913. The most interesting entries came after the 1913 Mellette County Fair, as Produce Receipts: "Dec. 13, 1913—1st Prize Pumpkin Pie, 50c. Dec. 13—2nd Prize Best Display Farm Products, \$1.00. Dec. 13—2nd Prize 6 Stalks Yellow Dent Corn, 50c. Dec. 13—2nd Prize Onions, 25c."

A "Mellette County Pioneer" supplement dated Sept. 12, 1913, carried an article by Uncle Rufus, who always managed to get a lot of straight reporting worked in between his wisecracks. ("He" was Grace Brown of Happy Hollow! W. R.)

## "FAIR NOTES" 1275689

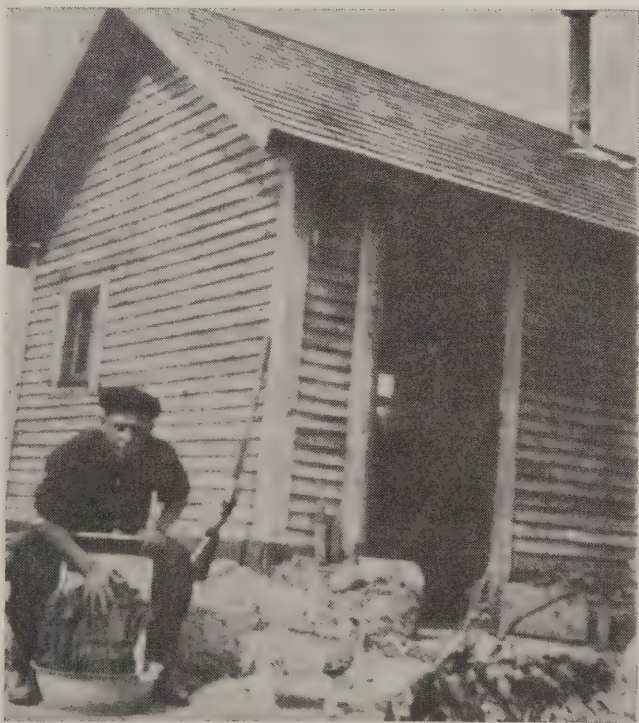
"Mister Curlin has consented to give th wimmen of th nabberhood lessons in makin pukin pie. He took first prise; Fritz Lion took first prise on mince pie . . . it was a strenuous weak, but everbuddy was out to Sunday School Sunday . . . and then some. Th preacher was th first one there and he look ever whitch way fer sines ov th congregashun and didnt see nobody. He was scairt there woodent be eny crowd, but in a secont here come Miss Brown in her shay; and then come Mister Wilson in his barooch; and Mister Jar Bowl in his sorry; and Mister Greens in there auto from Wood and Mister Colburn in his auto from White River, and fellers on hoss-back and in wagons and on foot and by the time th preacher got his hosses tied he was satisfied that they WOOD be a crowd. About fifty souls was present, and after the preechin about forty mellons was cut and et, and then on top of that Mister Colburn come passin around a guney bag full of Mellette County apples . . . I wisht some of th folks back east that thinks we cant raise nuthin here cood have been to Sunday School Sunday . . . and to th Big Mellette County Fair last week.

"Happy Hollow took th prise fer havin th most artistick exhibit. There isent no flies on Happy Hollow, and there isent menny snakes in Happy Hollow nuther. . . . from the looks of Mister Curlins they are about all skun. Curlins peanut vines was th only nutty things from Happy Hollow."

In another Supplement to the "Pioneer" dated Dec. 19, 1913, rival writer Uncle Silas wrote that "The Bachelor Club of the Pure Water District gave a Pink Tea at the home of Frankie Jarboe last Saturday evening. Covers were laid for four and the guest of honor was Col. James Rummy Funk, who had just returned from a short visit with his parents at Sioux City. Those present were James Funk, Mason Merrill, Frank Jarboe and Charles Kerlin. Jarboe and Merrill took charge of the cooking operations, and while Merrill pounded the steak and Frankie prepared the coffee, Kerlin washed the potatoes and celery . . ."

There were other rare and hilarious get-togethers, like the "Christmas on The Rosebud" dinner of three bachelors hosted by a bachelor lady. Another was "Bachelors Thanksgiving Dinner" on Nov. 26, 1914, at Charlie Kerlin's 909 Ranch.

Charlie liked telling the story of his oyster stew. Oysters were pretty rare, so when he got some, he invited his bachelor friends over for the special treat. But refrigeration was pretty poor in those days, and the oysters



Bachelor Charlie Kerlin washing his duds on his claim in 1913.



turned out to be spoiled when it came time to make the stew. Charlie was resourceful to the end. He went right ahead and prepared the stew—milk, butter, parsley, salt and pepper—and set out lots of crackers with the bowls. The oysters, safely out of sight, filled the room with their aroma, mingling with that of the hot salty milk. The bachelors arrived, took their seats, and fell to the burning hot stew, commenting on its delicious oyster flavor! Not until they scraped bottom did they realize that nowhere had any of them run across an oyster!

But Charlie didn't remain a bachelor. Less than two years after the "Bachelors Thanksgiving Dinner," Charlie was bitten first by a rattlesnake, then by the love-bug, and he married the nurse who came up from Nebraska to tend the great leg wound resulting from the snakebite. Rev. Hugh C. Van Valkenburgh married Charles Kerlin and Ottillie Clare Vavra on August 28, 1916, uniting two people who had been raised in Nebraska but who never met until the hazards of pioneering in South Dakota brought their paths together. Charlie was 45 when he married his 28-year-old bride.



Ottillie Clare Vavra, R. N.

They started out their married life in a large room over the White River Bank, annoyed and sometimes alarmed by commotions in the adjoining "apartment" where stayed a boisterous neighbor who has since departed from this world and perhaps improved her deportment since then.

That Thanksgiving of 1916, Ottillie Kerlin wrote a poem which twenty years later was reprinted in the Mellette County News:

#### I'M THANKFUL

I'm thankful for this very life,  
And for the sight of all these lands;  
Though this world is full of strife  
And White River streets are full of sand  
That blows into your eyes and mouth  
Yet, how nice it is to know  
One has a home where one may go,  
And be so thankful in the end.  
I'm thankful for the many things  
That every year will always bring.  
For goodies that will make our "stomys" glad—  
And joys which overcome us when we're sad—  
And, too, I'm thankful for the man  
Who's glad to have me share his heart and hand.

Coming together from different backgrounds of nationality, religion, and age, the common bound of adventurousness and overcoming the odds of settling in a new country and helping establish a home in White River overcame any seeming differences. Their will to

ONE CENT FIVE CENTS

## RATTLESNAKE BITE ENDS IN WEDDING OF FORMER OMAHAN

1916

Reptile Attacks C. W. Kerlin;  
He Marries Girl Who  
Nursed Him.

BACHELORS "JOSH" HIM

They Advertise in the Home  
Paper for "Certain Kind  
of Snake Bite."

NOT MENTIONING NAMES

A romance, growing out of a rattlesnake bite, culminated in the wedding of Miss Ottillie C. Vavra, Omaha nurse, and Charles W. Kerlin, White River, S. D., the ceremony having taken place in that city August 28, according to word which has just reached Omaha.

Mr. Kerlin was bitten by a rattlesnake six weeks ago. Three weeks later Miss Vavra was sent for by his physician to nurse him.

It was a case of love at first sight, and the wedding followed the three weeks' wooing.

Friends of the Omaha nurse, who was well known here, where she was graduated from the Douglas county training school in 1910, were completely surprised.

Mr. Kerlin is county auditor at White River. He and his bride will make their home there.

Former Omahan.

The groom formerly lived in Omaha, having gone to Dakota in 1912 to homestead. He had never met his wife until she was called in on his case.

One of the White River papers is now carrying an advertisement signed by half a dozen prosperous bachelors in that town. The ad reads: "Will pay well for the right kind of a snake bite."

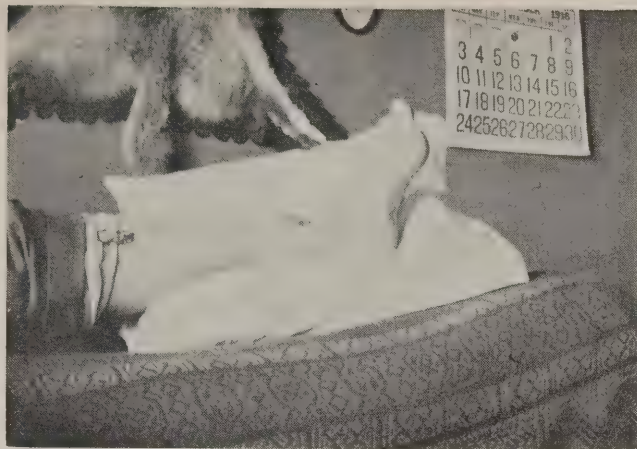
Clipping from Omaha, Nebr., newspaper  
just after Aug. 28, 1916.

do right, respect others, revere God, and face life with courage and a smile, carried on through their lives, into the lives of their children and grandchildren.

Charles and Ottillie Kerlin had three children—Richard Grant, born June 21, 1917; Mary Lois, born Sept. 1, 1920; and Doris Susan, born Sept. 13, 1922—and for them, they made many sacrifices.

This particular account is written from the viewpoint of their son, from family mementoes and from his own treasured memories:





**The rattlesnake bite that became the legend of Happy Hollow.**

Many are the memories of Mellette County—starting in White River, ending on the farm near Wood—that still live on in 1961:

Falling all the way down the long stairs from the room above the bank when only two or three; searching for lost kitty Barney; falling into the excavation north of the bank and mother trapped after sliding in to rescue me; ice cream from Doc O'Reilley at White River Drug Store across the street; spring visits to the claim and the white and yellow salt and pepper flowers poking through the crackly earth; wet sand between my toes in White River ditches; the stab of sandburs in bare feet and the burning feeling after you pulled them out; the smell of idoform in Doc Bouza's office and the aching lump in my arm from my first inoculation.

The pouring rain on the Model T's side curtains as we slid through the Badlands on the way to the claim in summer; the thick green grass and the tiny red climbing roses on the front of Holland's house, and playing there with Elaine Holland, Joy Hodges and E. G. Rudolph; dad, alarmed, finding me downtown after curfew; snow crunching underfoot; Jack Hight pulling us on our sleds past the Methodist church behind his pony; zipping down the hill west of White River on my sled and trudging home past the town dump; black Model T's chugging through the white snow; the taste of warm milk and graham crackers brought from home to school—somehow mixed with the crack of Mrs. Elits' ruler on my knuckles in 1st or 2nd grade; dancing in the theater aisle to the piano music while watching silent movies of Hoot Gibson.

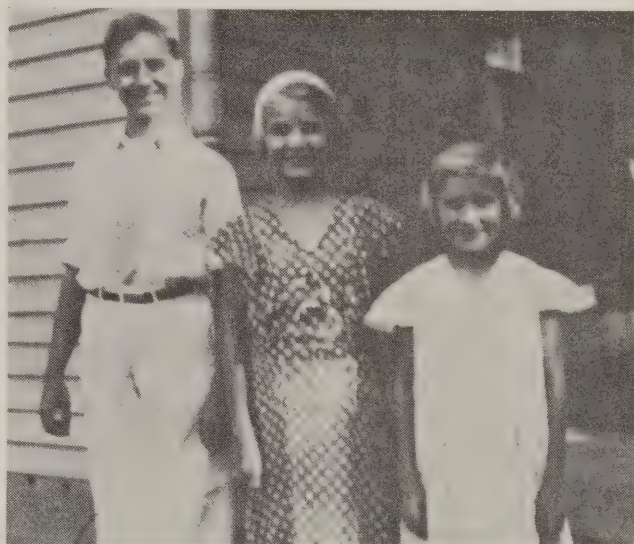
Reading "Raggedy Ann" with Olea at the Brodball's house; the wild crash of mother driving the Model T through the garage door while dad yelled "Stop! Stop!"; the smell of printers' ink at Noah Gerig's "Mellette County News" print shop; taking turns with Hollands and Hodges for 3-family Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years' dinners, alternating between turkey, duck and goose; moving from the house between Holland's and Father Walsh's to the one south of Mansons; Rodney Manson playing his banjo that lighted up inside, and Marjorie playing the piano next door; the horse biting off my first gladiolus, "Mrs. Frank Pendleton"; mother and dad getting the Mason & Hamlin upright from Chicago so I could take piano lessons from Mrs. Pearsall while in 4th grade; trying to practice while mother vacuumed.

Learning to swim the hard way in the Little White

under the bridge west of town; eating beans at Sime Fridy's alongside the river farther south; going to a political rally north of town with dad and eating cold apples and cookies in the back seat of the Model T at 3 a.m. on the way back; box and pie socials in country schoolhouses; Congregational Church dinners with the incessant friendly Ladies' Aid talk all around; playing with Lawrence and Clifford Olson, and with Billy Rasmussen and the Hrakovec boys; watching dad bury the bounty heads and tails of crows, magpies, ground squirrels and coyotes in the dry well hole in the court house yard; the Chautauqua tent and nightly programs across from the 1st to 4th grade school in the court house yard.

Tourists' tents and Indian tents outside town for Frontier Days—Indians dancing in the streets with bells jingling and beads, pennies, bones, feathers, quills and all flying to the thump of the tom-toms as the squaws went up-down, up-down in the outside ring; eating Doc Bouza's pink wintergreen lozenges and reading his "Amazing Stories" magazines with their stories of rocket planes, television and travel to other worlds—amazing then, becoming reality now; watching the northern lights stream up and up, and wondering what it was like farther north.

These memories have never faded. They have receded at times—but like the northern lights, they stream up and up, ready to look at in all their color. Perhaps memories seem stronger when you have moved away from a place you loved, never to return. If you stay in one place, its own memories blur into the daily sights and sounds of each day's new reality, and the present gets in the way of the past.



**Dick, Mary and Doris Kerlin  
(About 1932)**

Living in a rather barren country helps you appreciate the many things that are there if you learn to look for them. This helps you not to take things for granted, wherever you later live. Johnny-jump-ups on the prairie open your eyes for the lush beauty of azaleas in the deep south. Yucca on the side of a butte is like a palm tree on the ocean beach. A thrush singing on and on from a lone tree on the plain sets your ears to hear every note of a coloratura soprano on the stage. The dry wells you dig before striking water teach you always to keep trying in your work until you get results. Pumping and carrying water in buckets helps you appreciate the ease of faucets and running water for the rest of your life!



Seeing some of the bare bones of this earth in the form of Badlands, and the rugged glacier-carved contours of the buttes looming on the horizon, makes you thankful for the rich soil that grows our food, and for trees and grass.

The heroic carvings looking out so fearlessly from Mount Rushmore seem to belong nowhere but in South Dakota. This fearless independence was stated another way in the pioneer motto that dad always had on the wall—"LIVE EACH DAY SO THAT YOU CAN LOOK EVERY DAMN MAN IN THE EYE AND TELL HIM TO GO TO HELL"—at first startling, but conveying an unforgettable truth. The uncompromising honesty of dad, and his and mother's determination and perseverance, together with their respect for all people, set a tremendous example. Seeing people of all kinds come together to build a country and communities where they could survive together—in spite of drawbacks, weaknesses and troubles—was a lesson for life.

School days in White River and Wood are a little run-together in my mind's eye. Perhaps it is because my parents started me to kindergarten about a year earlier than most, and I never stopped going to school until reaching the far end of college. Skipping third grade kept me hopping, so I didn't really know multiplication tables thoroughly until working on my master's thesis in 1939-40! Some high spots stand out, like getting to compete in 6th grade with 7th and 8th graders in spelling contests in White River. The next year found me amazed to represent Mellette County at the State Fair in Huron, and by a couple of quirks coming up with a second prize in spelling. There dad introduced me to Gov. Bulow, who congratulated me and shook my hand. But I learned a bigger lesson in 8th grade—overconfidence led me to flop in the county contest.

In White River, on the way home from school (a block north of the Methodist Church) I used to stop in dad's office in the court house and sometimes walk home with him down the path behind the Catholic Church and Father Walsh's house to our back yard. Dad told me years later that when I stopped coming by his office, and played with the kids instead, that he knew I had started to grow up and away from him. I am beginning to know what that meant to him. Dad, being largely Scotch-Irish, had a sentimental heart behind the grin seen so often during his younger days. It shows up in my son, Greg, and there are times when I look at Greg and half wonder if he could be Charlie Kerlin reborn, with the feeling, humor, big heart, sense of justice, quick wit and all. Certainly my daughter, Cheryl, is in many ways my mother all over again!

When dad, after having been elected county auditor for four two-year terms, and county treasurer for two more terms (first as Democrat, then as a Republican when he felt this was a better thing to do), decided to run for sheriff, he was defeated by Bert Humphrey, and we moved back to the claim five miles west of Wood. Dad had learned to judge hides from his work paying bounties as county auditor, and had made some profit buying and selling various skins, and sometimes by cashing county warrants for people who were so paid. He had bought the two quarters bordering his original claim in 1919 and 1924. The old prairie shack was hauled down to a valley spot and beside it mother and dad built their first and only "big enough" house. Mother wore herself out on the floors and woodwork, but was never more proud. Dad farmed the place with rented equipment, and raised his usual vast assortment of melons, pump-

kins, fruits and vegetables in addition to the corn, wheat and oats. Mother canned vegetables and her special tomato preserves, and we picked wild plums and chokecherries for her jelly-making. In the summer we would only eat the hearts of the watermelons (the chickens got the rest), but dad always stored a heap of them in the strawstack for after frost. I would take mother's fresh-baked poppyseed kolaches (Czechoslovakian tarts) out to where dad was stretching barbed wire fence, and we would eat them together. I got off pretty easy on the farm work, but did learn to shock sheaves, feed calves, run the separator, gather eggs, simple cooking, and milk cows (could squirt right into the cat's mouth, too)!

Dad had borrowed the Liberty Bond he bought for me when I was born during the war, to help buy a cow. After helping raise the calf, I was repaid when it was sold, and I immediately ordered a bicycle from Sears Roebuck and taught myself to ride it on the farm. This was not long after Lindbergh made his historic one-man, non-stop flight across the Atlantic, and I had some dream of making a long bicycle trip alone. Meanwhile, I learned to ride and keep my balance in deep Model-A ruts in the dirt roads, and would ride the five miles to Wood to school, and sometimes the 18 miles to White River to visit old pals there.

Those farm days near Wood have their share of memories, too. The sweet sharp song of a meadowlark on a fencepost; fleecy white clouds with every fold and billow plain against the deep blue sky; the wind, sometimes just rattling the cottonwood leaves, sometimes pushing against you hard; mouth-watering wild plums hanging ripe from the trees along the creek; distant coyote howls mingled with pulsing tom-toms in the night; endless miles of hard crusted snow for me and my sled; digging blue-white caves in the big drifts; building shaky rafts that almost sank in the swollen creek after the thaws; dad showing me how to make willow whistles; sneaking up on prairie chickens with a .22 trapping for rabbits and catching a skunk!; gathering hailstones to make ice cream.

When it was below zero, dad would light one of his cobs soaked in kerosene on the end of a wire, and heat the manifold to get the car started. In those days, car heaters hadn't been invented, and there were some cold trips to school. Neighbor Sherlock drove the school bus, a car with closed sides, and his kids, ours and the Burkinshaws would sing all the way to school. One day Sherlock was singing a hymn as he drove along, when suddenly the axle broke, and he instantly changed his tune. We all liked school. Dad was strong for a good education, and he served as clerk of the Wood Independent School District No. 1 in 1929-1930.

Dad loved to hunt. He had hunted and fished in Nebraska and Minnesota with his brother, Harry, and his good friend, Grant Hogeland (after whom my son and I were given our middle name). Once I saw dad down a prairie chicken on a post a quarter of a mile east of the old shack with the old single-shot .22. Another pure luck shot was when he fired his shotgun straight up into the cries of a flock of geese flying over at night, and one tumbled down! But he was a good shot, as attested by the turkeys he brought back from many a turkey shoot—and that meant breaking clay pigeons. Once mother wanted to fire a shotgun, so he loaded up his 10-gauge and let her fire without warning her how to stand and lean into it. He thought it would be a joke, but was sorry as he helped her to her feet—as was she.

By 1930, dad and mother had decided to move to Ne-



braska. This was my chance for a real bike trip—and to my surprise (as I was only 12) they consented. With a little extra money sewed in the waistband of my knickers, tire pump, patches and wrench secured, and underwear and toothbrush strapped to the luggage carrier, and a supply of postcards for progress reports, I was off like a pioneer. With the last barbed-wire gate closed behind me, and a last look down the long hill road at the family waving from the yard, I had seen our Mellette County farm for the last time.

Starting late, I made Colome the first day and stayed overnight in a hotel, as planned. Next day my goal of Meek, Nebr., turned out to be just a filling station and a house or two. The people there thought at first that I had run away from home, because of my small size and homesick condition, but put me up overnight and saw me off with hot oatmeal next morning. Next night I got to O'Neill, Nebr., where the hotel refused to charge me, and a woman traveler put salve on my badly sunburned ears and nose. The following evening I rode into Linwood as triumphantly as any Lindbergh, to the relief of mother's relatives, who were anxiously wondering if I would make it!

We had planned to go to Omaha to live, but the depression had arrived, and Linwood was the end of that trail. Mother and dad bought a house there and dad gardened on the three lots, raising all sorts of vegetables and strawberries, grapes, raspberries and some of Burbank's brand-new developments, and later more fruit trees. Dad became a member of the Linwood School Board and its director, justice of the peace, and superintendent of the Linwood Congregational Church. He tried once to run for county treasurer, but as a newcomer in a field of twelve candidates, he did not win the nomination. Finally he decided that absentee ownership of the Mellette County land was not working out, and sold it. We all hated to part title with this land where so many happy days and so much work had been put in, but we knew, too, that it was partly the pioneer dream coming to an end.

Later I finished high school in Linwood, won a Regents' Scholarship to the University of Nebraska and worked in restaurants and boarding houses for meals, and mounted botanical specimens and assisted in clay research to help pay my way. How mother and dad scraped through during my time in college has been one of the marvels of my life. Graduating in 1938 with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering, I found jobs scarce and worked for Nebraska State Highway Department until a fellowship enabled me to get a master's in engineering mechanics, in 1940. For six months I was a water chemist in Pecos, Texas, for the U. S. Geological Survey. South Dakota upbringing led me to like the dry climate and flat country around Pecos. In 1941 I went to work for Mallinckrodt Chemical Works in St. Louis, Mo. Chemical and engineering work have kept me occupied there ever since, except for 18 months in the Navy as an Electronic Technician during World War II. (Oddly, a "new development" in one of the advanced radar sets turned out to be the same thing dad's old Neutrodyne battery radio in South Dakota used, when we listened to Canada with the earphones.) Since 1953, my work has been with the Mallinckrodt Uranium Division.

Another Mallinckrodt engineer named Keith Hubbard is from South Dakota. He told me he was born in Burke, where his father, Benjamin Israel Hubbard, was the Methodist minister. His father had previously lived in White River from about 1900-1925, where he broke Mor-



**Muriel and Dick Kerlin at Denver National Square Dance Convention, June 1959.**

gan mares, later attending Wessington Springs Seminary. Keith's grandfather, Benjamin Franklin Hubbard, was a blacksmith in White River, and before that was in the Black Hills gold rush with his brother, Hiram.

During all this time, mother and dad stayed on at their place in Linwood, Nebr. The Van Valkenburghs were at Arlington, but we didn't see them often. Dad's arthritis got worse, and he stayed with Doris during the winter of 1945 in Tucson, Ariz. He went on to Los Angeles for treatment at the Veterans Hospital there and mother went back to Linwood. As he did not improve, he made the return trip by train with considerable effort in 1947. Staying in Linwood two years longer, he entered the Soldiers and Sailors Home in Grand Island, Nebr., as a member in Pershing Hospital there. There he passed away on March 31, 1952, at the age of 81.

Dad was always proud of the fact that he had been a volunteer in the Spanish American War. His contracting typhoid-malarial fever as a soldier led to his doctor advising him to get outdoors and away from an office to recover—and this is how he came to go to South Dakota to become a Mellette County pioneer. The minister who married him, Rev. Hugh C. Van Valkenburgh, came from Arlington to officiate at his funeral. He spoke as an old friend even more than as a minister and what he said would have made my father feel his life was very well spent. Interment was in West Lawn cemetery in Omaha, with full military honors rendered by personnel sent from Offutt Air Base nearby. At the head of the grave is the marker:

CHARLES W. KERLIN  
PVT. 2, NEBR. INFANTRY  
SP. AM. WAR

JAN. 22, 1871 — MARCH 31, 1952

Mother continued to work as a nurse after this, having always kept up her registration, and having been called on to nurse in many an emergency wherever she was. She had trained at Douglas County Hospital in



Omaha, and took post-graduate training in Bellevue Hospital in New York City. Now she worked for some time at the Annex to the Douglas County Hospital, maintaining her home at Linwood. After retiring from nursing, she stayed on in spite of the considerable work of keeping an inconvenient house and three large lots and gardening, and paid visits to the three children, and they to her. She loved her independence. But unexpectedly she became ill, and in spite of surgery and radiation treatments, and a long hospitalization (where she endeared herself to all her own nurses and doctors), she followed her husband five years after and was interred alongside him. The grave marker reads:

OTTILLIE C. VAVRA  
WIFE OF CHARLES W. KERLIN  
REG. NURSE  
FEB. 8, 1888 — SEPT. 11, 1957

Although they are gone from the sight of our eyes, they live on in the memories of all who knew them. And an experience dad had on his Mellette County claim on Nov. 10, 1915, shows his deep religious feeling and is heartening to read. He wrote this about ten years before his death, and I found it among his effects:

"Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have Everlasting Life."

"When I was a boy, my mother often talked to me of spiritual things, how God's spirit talked to our spirit, and how, if we listened to this inner voice, and allowed ourselves to be guided by it, it would not only influence our whole life for good, but that after death, our spirit, or soul, would be transported to another sphere, where, released from confinement in a mortal body, we would still live in whatever way God had in store for us.

"Not until later years did I come to realize fully the deep meaning of all the spiritual truths my mother had implanted in my mind during my youth, and which I understood more fully, the more I allowed myself to be led by this inner guide.

"Feeling the need of a change from office work, I took up a homestead in a western state and built a shack in which I lived until I proved up after which I moved to a nearby town, where I worked in a county office. Occasionally I took a few days off and went out to my homestead to work with crops planted there.

"I had been away from home for many years, but still heard from my parents occasionally, and they were get-

ting along all right. I had not heard from them for several months, and had not been thinking about them, having plenty to occupy my hands and mind.

"One day I went out to the claim to spend several days. The second evening it began to rain gently, and at bedtime there was a steady drizzle on the roof of my shack. After retiring, I was soon sound asleep, but sometime in the night was brought wide awake by a feeling that someone was trying to lift me out of the bed. I got up and lit the lamp, so strong was my feeling that someone was there, and it seemed to me it was my mother; I could feel her presence so strongly. I looked at my watch, and it was a little after three. I went back to bed, but could not get over the feeling that my mother was very near.

"In the morning it was still raining, and looking out the window about ten o'clock, I saw a man coming on horseback. As he came closer, I saw it was my deputy from the office. I went out to meet him as he dismounted, and he said, 'Well, boss, I have some bad news for you,' and I replied, 'My mother is dead, isn't she?' and he said, 'Yes,' handing me a telegram, which read, 'mother died about three o'clock this morning.'

"Twenty-five years have passed since that night, but my mother's visit is still as vivid in my mind as it was that night, and I will never forget the assurance it brought to me that there is a life after death."

When daily activities crowd upon us and we wonder whether they are worthwhile ones, we could ponder those of Charlie Kerlin when he was raising his family in White River, Mellette County, S. D.—besides his full-time job as county auditor and county treasurer successively, and keeping his claim—clerk of the Exemption Board for the entire period of World War I (after he tried himself to enlist), chairman of the Red Cross during the war years, treasurer of the Red Cross hospital in White River, superintendent of the Sunday School and church treasurer for the White River Congregational Church, a Mason for nineteen years, and a Past Noble Grand of the Odd Fellows, and of course a very active participant in his other church, community and local political affairs! And Ottillie, with so much of her time occupied with her home and three children, was also very active in church and community, doing Red Cross fund solicitation, and nursing during the flu epidemic as well.

This world, with all the problems we have made, seems a better place because there has lived here—and acted for the right—Ottillie and Charlie Kerlin.



Mom and Dad Kerlin





Burns Hotel in Wood, South Dakota, about 1916.  
Ada Burns, Kate Diamond, Ruth Riddle and Mil-  
dred (Burns) Evans, who sent the picture.

Kents Restaurant in White River. Waitress,  
Florence MacDonald; cook, Mrs. Verba; dish-  
washer, Catherine Hale; baker, Dick Boise.  
Sent by Mrs. Moorhouse.







## Early White River Scenes 1912 - 1914

From the collection of  
Clyde and Jessie Ilgenfritz

Jessie (Green) Ilgenfritz in red silk  
dress at time of filing claim. Clyde  
was the pitcher for the Sargent ball  
team.







The Cousins Homestead

The Corrigan Homestead

Mr. Brown, in auto, had lived in territory thirty years before it was opened to white men. He ran a trading post by the river.







Corrigan's Homestead



Indian Council

The Indians would come and dance in front of the store until the owner gave them something.











Fourth of July Doings



Bad Blizzard in March, 1913.







Agnes DeLashmutt  
 John Green  
 Byrd Jones  
 Jessie Green  
 Harry Doran at the wheel  
 Nance Smith in a Mitchell auto.







Hargold  
Edham  
John Dotan  
Mary Coyle  
Mr. Coyle

Claims were registered at Gregory  
in this building.



SWING BRIDGE  
WHITE RIVER  
S.D.



# Mellette County Legislative Report, 1911-1961



**Gov. Gubbrud signing House Bill 605: Construction of new highway between Winner and Platte. Louise Humphrey of White River, and Frank McKenzie of Winner, co-sponsors of the bill, look on. (Inset, Connie Hight, first page from Mellette Co., with speaker of the House Carl Burgess - April, 1961)**

(Information compiled by  
Mrs. Joe Cannon)

- 1913—Sen. J. L. Brown, Winner; Tripp and Mellette Counties. Rep. E. V. Lindquist, Carter; Tripp and Mellette Counties.
- 1915—Sen. W. H. McClintock, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. Cary Donahoe, Witten; Tripp and Mellette.
- 1917—Sen. W. H. McClintock, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. C. E. Kell, White River; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett.
- 1919—Sen. H. E. Covey, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. J. H. Perry, White River; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1921—Sen. H. E. Covey, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. J. H. Perry, White River; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1923—Sen. H. E. Covey, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. B. A. Olson, White River; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1925—Sen. H. E. Covey, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. Tom Berry, Belvidere; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1927—Sen. Frank T. Fetzner, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. Tom Berry, Belvidere; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1929—Sen. Frank T. Fetzner, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. Tom Berry, Belvidere; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1931—Sen. Frank T. Fetzner, Hamill; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. Paul McDill, Wood; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1933—Sen. C. M. Barton, Colome; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. S. V. Callen, White River; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1935—Sen. C. M. Barton, Colome; Tripp, Mellette and Bennett. Rep. S. V. Callen, White River; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1937—Sen. J. B. Painter, Colome; Tripp, Mellette, Bennett and Todd. Rep. C. W. Darbyshire, Martin; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1939—Sen. E. E. Morford, O'Kreek; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. C. W. Darbyshire, Martin; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1941—Sen. E. E. Morford, O'Kreek; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. W. E. Root, Wood; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1943—Sen. Chris Dam, Rosebud; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. W. E. Root, Wood; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1945—Sen. Chris Dam, Rosebud; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. Alex Olson, Martin; Jackson, Mellette, Bennett and Washabaugh.
- 1947—Sen. C. F. Manson, White River (Ill, failed to qualify); Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. Alex Olson, Martin; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1949—Sen. Alex Olson, Martin; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. Paul McDill, Wood; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1951—Sen. Alex Olson, Martin; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. Paul McDill, Wood; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1953—Sen. Alex Olson, Martin; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. Paul McDill, Wood; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1955—Sen. James Ramey, Wanblee; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. O. A. Hodson, Martin; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1957—Sen. James Ramey, Wanblee; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. O. A. Hodson, Martin; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1959—Sen. James Ramey, Wanblee; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. Louise B. Humphrey, White River; Mellette and Bennett.
- 1961—Sen. James Ramey, Wanblee; Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Bennett and Washabaugh. Rep. Louise B. Humphrey, White River; Mellette and Bennett.

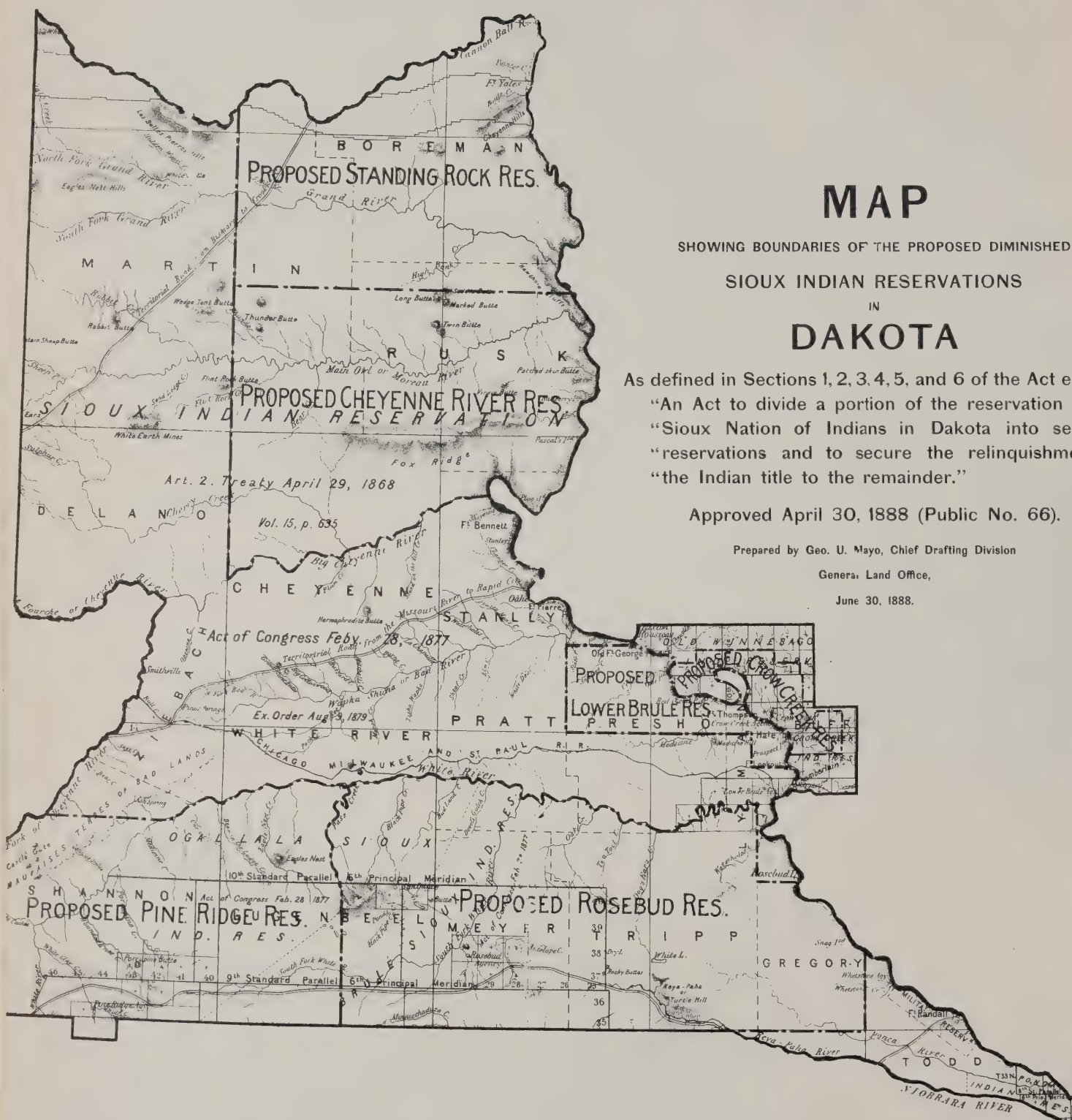
(Mrs. Humphrey has the distinction of being the first woman to serve as a legislator from this district.)



# FIXING BOUNDARIES OF THE PROPOSED DIMINISHED SIOUX INDIAN RESERVATIONS IN DAKOTA

Approved April 30, 1888 (Public No. 66).

Prepared by Geo. U. Mayo, Chief Drafting Division  
General Land Office,  
June 30, 1888.





## The Rosebud Reservation

— From the picture collection of Clyde and Jessie Ilgenfritz —







INDIAN VILLAGE ROSEBUD SD.



AGRICULTURE EXHIBIT INDIAN FAIR ROSEBUD SD.



INTERIOR OF A INDIAN HOUSE MELLETTE SD.









Mr. Perry was the teacher at the Indian school. On either side of him is a truant officer who would round up children each morning that did not report at the school.

The two little Indian girls at the right are Sarah Bordeaux and Fanny Standing Elk with Clyde Ilgenfritz.













# Helping Survey Mellette County

As told to Winifred Reutter

Charley Larison, who with his wife, Minda, now lives in Belvidere, S. D., was one of the men who actually helped put Mellette County on the map, as he furnished some of the teams and wagons for the surveyors back in 1910 and 1911 and was an early surveyor's assistant. Most of the land had previously been surveyed into sections. The men were headed by J. B. Scrivin, who was a member of the Government appraising and allotting crews. Dick Allison, an Indian, represented the Indian Department, and a third man, who also helped with the group Charlie piloted around. They had to find these marked, and sometimes unmarked section corners. Then their job would be to survey and cross-section each piece of land. In other words, figure out the exact center of the section and the half-way point between the corners. These places they would mark with Government stakes, thus making four quarters of land, 160 acres each, out of each section.

I always thought when I saw these iron stakes around here in the Rosebud Reservation that they had been driven into the ground. But Charley said that it couldn't be driven because it was a large iron having two hooks on it and was full of cement. So they had to dig a hole and set the stake in it.

The Government was giving the Indians first choice of land before it was to be opened for homesteading. The allotting was done before it was appraised for white settlement and they tried to give the Indians the best land and leave the rough out. So it was Larison's job to take these men to the land each Indian selected and there they would place a special iron Government stake at each corner of the allotment. Usually it was a quarter (160 acres), sometimes a half section (320 acres) and sometimes an Indian was allotted a whole section of land.

One of the earlier surveying crews had been headed by a man named Anderson or Gunderson. Usually those earlier markers were wooden stakes with numbers burned on them, but sometimes it was only a buried tin can containing stones, or posts, or a large rock, or sometimes marked with a cross. There were also markings

burned in or cut on trees along the Little White River.

Most of the Indians were unable to read and write at that time so some of them would select a piece of land, pull up the wooden stake, then take it to the Rosebud Agency to show the officials there the numbers and descriptions on it. These descriptions, section, range and township, were duly recorded as that particular Indian's allotment and he would ride back up into Mellette County and put the stake back where he found it.

Some of the rocks and cans used as section corner markers by the first surveyors were pretty hard to find by the time Larison brought his men along. A couple of times they found tents set up and once a log house had been built right on the locations where the iron markers were to be put in.

All the transportation and equipment necessary was usually supplied by Charley Larison. Sometimes he drove Government horses when appraising. He furnished three teams of horses, freight wagons, chuck wagon and all. Sam Chilton was the crew boss. He was a surveyor and map maker.

The cook was George Howard, a colored lad who could make lots of tasty pies, cakes, bread and hot biscuits for his hungry bunch, although they were often many days and miles from towns and stores.

Chain men were George Hibbard and George Burning Breast.

The flagman was Wayne Scrivins and it was his job to ride ahead and locate the approximate site of the next marker so the rest of the boys could sight to it. He did this so often that his pony was trained to the job. Scrivins would take off and ride across this vast, rough, fenceless prairie land. Suddenly he'd stop and some of the crew would come on and invariably they'd find the marker within a couple rods; very often he was within six feet or less of the exact spot. Either the man or the horse, or perhaps both, had an uncanny ability of computing distance.

As mentioned before, some of the markers left by the earlier surveyors were buried cans or boulders and Larison's men would have to take a spade and dig holes to find these identifying objects. Sometimes it took quite a lot of time, then again they might find it quickly. Either way it was all in the day's work.

The iron stakes furnished by the Government made a heavy load to haul around the country side. They had to be freighted by horses to Rosebud from the closest railroad station at Valentine, Nebr. Each had Government information stamped on its top, such as, Government property, severe penalty for removal, etc. The letter N at one side which meant north, so care had to be taken to see that this was placed right when the stake was put into the ground. There was a large cross in the center. The surveyor's job was to set this stake into the proper spot and then they had equipment with which to stamp into the top of the stake the correct number of quarter, section, township, range and allotment number. One of their tricks while setting stakes was to tie a white handkerchief on the buggy wheel and count 240 turns before the next stop. So the wheatfield measurers of today are still using this method of counting the wheel turns.

Other old-timers who rode with Charley have told me that he was an excellent teamster. Although they also said that in driving across this open country he frequently went up and down places where jeeps would still fear



Paul Reutter points to a government iron stake near their place.



to travel today. However, I never heard of him losing a man or a horse, or having a bad accident. But I did hear that some of the men got off and walked when they came to the next steep place.

A fellow by the name of Hank Slaughter, Charley thought it was, had also started surveying the eastern part of the Rosebud country about this time, but he gave it up as a bad job and Chilton was assigned to take over in his place. Larison and his outfit were again hired to furnish the transportation and so they went to survey parts of Todd and Tripp Counties and later also over into the Lower Brule country.

Charley worked at this job during the summertime, but when it got so cold in the wintertime that the fresh, hot coffee froze when they were pouring it out of the coffee pot, then Larison took his teams and wagons back to Rosebud for the winter. During the winter months he frequently hauled food and supplies from Valentine to the Rosebud Agency. Probably he even hauled more iron stakes for surveyors to use somewhere the next summer.

At Rosebud there were two large livery barns. There was a stockade around the Agency at that time, although Charley says the gates were usually open so everyone went in and out as they pleased.

Charley, along with other riders, also trailed cattle out from ranches in the Valentine area to Rosebud, White River and other Issue Stations. There the cattle would be turned out (issued) to the Indians for slaughter on certain dates.

More recently, in the fall of 1960, Charley has again been wagon-boss, but this time he was taking part in a western chuck wagon scene—out on location in Mellette County—for a California movie company! I don't know where they could find anyone who could play the part more authentically than he would. Charley and Minda have retired from the ranch and make their home in Belvidere, S. D., but they still have their cattle down on the river.



Charley and Minda Larison

No story of Charley is complete without mentioning his ability as a roper. He has proven to many an unwary calf that the hand is quicker than the eye, when that hand is Charley's with a rope in it! One minute he will be standing there nonchalantly dangling his lariat and the next minute, to the surprise of the calf (and the bystanders), his rope has swung out and caught the calf by the hind feet. The way he does it, it looks so easy, until someone else tries to do the same thing and shows what a job it really is.

Mrs. Larison, or Minda as we all call her, is an artist and musician. She paints beautiful pictures and also plays the piano and violin. For a while she gave music lessons. Charley tells the story about a would-be music student coming to their home one day to make arrangements to take piano lessons. It just happened that Minda was away from home but the kid thought Charley was the one to give the lessons, so gave him a sample of his playing (?) ability. After a bit of this racket, he asked Charley, "How am I doing?"

"Just fine, just fine," Charley replied. "But I think you ought to play a little louder." The kid willingly obliged with a much louder discord before he went home. So be careful if Charley offers to give you music lessons. Remember Minda is the musician and Charley is the expert roper!

## Memorable Mellette County Incidents

By Wm. S. Morganfield

My first ride into Mellette County, then called Meyer County, was when my older brother, Alfred Morganfield, and I started from the east end of Dog Ear Lake and



Alfred and Bill Morganfield, 1909

rode northwest to Jess Leonard's place about one mile east of the place that is now Mosher. From there, we went north along the east side of Oak Creek to its mouth. During that whole trip we did not see a fence or a plowed field.

One other time we had our chuck wagon and were camping in the early spring, north of the Curtis ranch and on the north side of the creek. That night it started to snow and by morning we were covered over with a foot or so of wet snow on our bed rolls.

I can remember the beautiful valley stretching out to the east while riding on the ridge some nine or ten miles west of Carter. This valley was unblemished by fields and fences, where a little later a small town of Chilton was built with the main street running north and south. The townsite is now in Weaver's pasture. I think it started out to be quite a town, but it faded out. On these hills west of Chilton some wonderful folks homesteaded named Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bigler. When they proved up, Charlie got sick and died with pneumonia in the Stone Hotel in Carter. They were from O'Neill, Nebr. Mr. and Mrs. Bigler had three children.





Coyotes: S. D. State Animal



Tanning Hides



An Educational Resort



Old Timers on the Rosebud



Rosebud Indian Encampment





**Mr. and Mrs. Charley Bigler, homesteaders near Chilton, S. D.**

Does anyone remember the horse camp that was located southeast of White River town? It was some five miles out, just northwest of the Bad Land Butte that sits north of the highway as you go down the big hill going west. It consisted of a log hut covered with a dirt roof. As I rode by this place I saw characters that would show off the western TV men of today.

Another time, while my brother, Alfred, and I were riding through Mellette County before it was settled, we saw that a bad storm was coming up fast from the northwest. The only shelter we could see was a log hut, but because it was located on a trail, it was locked. So we stood in the east doorway. The storm then hit with a severe hailstorm and a rain that poured down six inches in no time.

One time, when we camped with our chuck wagon just at the base of the hill south of the Westover bridge, we had a visitor. It was an old full-blood Indian and he wanted one dollar. So we gave him the dollar to camp there. At this time, Murdo McKenzie (now Murdo) was just a few white buildings, spread out on the vast prairies, which could be seen for miles.

My brother, Alfred Morganfield, punched cows for Wood & Meyer (Paul Meyer was foreman) cattle outfit. I



**Red Horse . . . beat the drums and met homesteaders at Gregory when Tripp County was opened.**

also worked some with him. We had our camp at the mouth of Oak Creek, to the south and a little east. We used to save our table scraps and when an Indian boy, from the east down the river, came along we would give them to him and he would clean them up. One night he bunked on the ground with us. I woke up early, just at dawn. I raised up and saw the Indian disappearing over the horizon to the east. When I got up and was getting ready to go back to work, I found out that my chaps were gone. I caught up with the little Indian later and made him return them. This boy, now a man, is still living—old and sick.

Later, when we were riding down the river, we found "Mose" (an old friend of ours) up in a tree. There was a long-horned cow patrolling around the base of the tree and not too far away was a calf with a rope around its



**U+ (U Cross) Riders, 1909. Last Roundup. Left to right: Curley Sargent, Billie Brown (foreman), (name unknown), two Seth Bros., Paul Lamoreaux, Buster Brown, Foster Berry, and Clark Camel.**

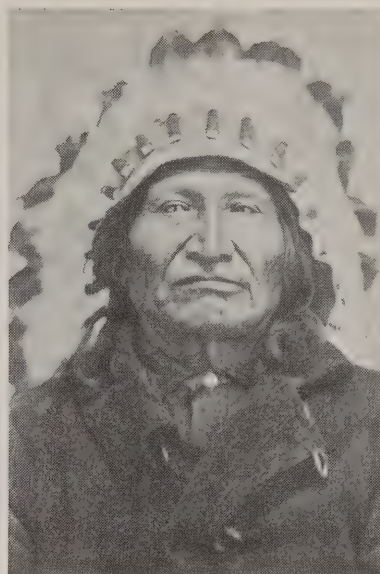




Bill Morganfield in first car races at White River, 1919.

neck. So you can guess what he had been up to. Poor Mose has long ago gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

At a later date, a camp was built farther up the creek which turned out to be the permanent camp. My brother, Alfred, cooked dinner one day. He had no meat when he started to get the meal, so he dressed and cooked a skunk. All hands ate it and liked it. He didn't tell them what it was until long after everyone had finished eating their dinner.



Chief Yellow Horse

## The Story Of MacDonalds

By Florence MacDonald Moorhouse

My father, William MacDonald, was a Spanish American War veteran. He had been disabled in the war and the doctors suggested that a western climate might be more suitable for him than the climate in Pennsylvania. So he decided to take a Government homestead in South Dakota. In March of the year 1912, he came by train to South Dakota from Falls Creek, Pa., and filed on a claim of 160 acres of land about five miles south of the town of White River.

He returned to Pennsylvania, sold his holdings and



Mr. and Mrs. Wm. MacDonald and 9 of their 10 children (Margaret died of a rattlesnake bite).

set out for White River in the early part of June with his wife Kate and seven children: Merle, Margaret, Rodrick, Florence (who is writing this story), Albert, Julia and a baby of three months, Carrie.

We arrived at Murdo, S. D., and hired a man with a car to take us to White River. It was the first car ride any of us had had, except perhaps for father.

We stayed at the Tomsik Hotel at White River for three days while Paul Beilke hauled lumber and started putting up our shack. When we moved in, I can remember seeing out through the rafters, so the shack wasn't entirely finished. On the way out to the shack we passed Paris Fridy's place. Sime Fridy came out and hollered: "Mac, you and the boys can stay here tonight." Mother said, "The boys can stay but Mac can't. I'm not going to stay up there alone with the Indians and coyotes around."

The Beilkes had come west ahead of us. They had homesteaded two and one-half miles east of us at the edge of the Badlands. Paul Beilke plowed a strip of land and planted some corn that first summer, but the corn didn't do very well.

All of the 160 acres we settled on could be farmed except for two draws across the northeast corner and a spring on the southwest corner. The level ground was sandy and the buildings were located on the northwest corner of the quarter. There was a large pond in the barnyard and in the spring, when the snow melted, or when we had heavy rains, the pond would fill up with



water. All of the kids would skate and have sled rides there in the winter. In the summer they would wade and play with the tadpoles there. We had a few ducks, and they enjoyed the pond for a while. When the rain and snow was heavy, and then melted, the pond would overflow into a draw north of the house. There was always water there the first few years we lived on that place, but in later years the pond dried up around August and then we had to drive our milk cows to the river for water.

Beilkes came through our place on their way to town. They drove a horse and buggy. They would mail our letters and bring back our mail for us.

The native grass was tall all around the house and there were large herds of range cattle roaming about. Once when father was away, mother took the revolver and shot at them to scare them away from our corn field. We kids picked up cow chips, which were plentiful that first summer, to burn in the stove. We had a kerosene stove for cooking and baking. We dug a hole on the north side of the house that first summer to put things in to keep them cool. One day I was sent out to get something from the cooler; when I lifted the lid, there lay a big rattlesnake.

The Little White River was about one mile west of the house. At first we hauled water from the river for our household use but later on in the summer we dug a well.



Playing in Little White River

Father worked for Jim Mitchell that first summer and fall. Later we got our first milk cow from him. Father was bitten by a snake while he was working at Mitchell's. I don't know if it was a rattlesnake or not but I remember when he came home his leg had a black and greenish color to it. He recovered from the bite. Father also worked for Joe Winters and George Schmidt in the fall, shucking corn. Once in a while father worked for Tommie Thompson down at the Issue Station. Tommy had a farm south of Pony Flat.

That fall Merle and Margaret walked to town to attend school. Miss Mary Coyle was the teacher for the term 1912-13. The school was held in a building that later became Spears store. The building was one of several that burned down in 1924 when a fire in White River burned a half block. Other children who attended school that year were Andy Smith, P. Van Valkenburgh, Ray Whitt, Bob and Vera Cummings, Rose and Clem Tomsik, Dorothy Jones, Minnie and Lynn Hamby.

The next spring, around March 13, we had the blizzard of 1913. In the morning it was bright and clear. Merle and Margaret had gone to school as usual. In the afternoon it started to snow and continued all night. A high-wind came up during the night and it got very cold. Mother and dad were up all night, worrying and wondering if Merle and Margaret had started home and were lost in the storm. They kept the lamp burning all night.

By morning the snow had drifted even with the top of the house. Father shoveled so that he could get out to the barn and milk the cow. Then he started out for town walking over the crusted drifts.

In town the snow had drifted even with the tops of the buildings on the west side of the street. Mrs. Tomsik had gone to the schoolhouse and taken Merle and Margaret home to stay with them at the hotel. That was only one of the many times that she kept us and wouldn't let us go home when it was severely cold and stormy. Several times, later on, four of us stayed with her.

That summer we had more neighbors: Adolph Kloney from Comstock, Nebr., Mr. and Mrs. B. R. Briggs from Plymouth, Iowa, also Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Schwartz and Matilda from Parkston, S. D.

We had a good garden, a large watermelon patch and field of corn the summer of 1913. We also had acquired a team and wagon by then. On the Fourth of July we had a picnic on the river. Those who attended were Mr. and Mrs. Paul Beilke, Adolph Kloney, Sime Fridy, our family and my mother's brother, Clarence Hetrick, who was visiting us.

In the fall of 1913 four of us went to town to school, walking when father needed the team. We had a buckskin and a bay. We called them old "plugs." We would fill the wagon with hay, then sit on blankets on the hay. During the day the horses would eat the hay. One day, on the way home from school, we came to the foot of the river hill and the buckskin balked and then the bay lay down and wouldn't move. The youngest kids walked home and told father. The hill was gumbo and real slippery from melting snow. Father led the horses around the hill to the north side where the snow hadn't melted and they went up fine. In the spring when the snow melted, the water would sometimes float the wagon box when we were crossing the Schwartz Creek.

During the second school year, 1913-14, Roddy and I had Miss Mary Reynolds for our teacher. Merle and Margaret had Mrs. Schroeder up until the holidays and then they had Maribel Idsmoe. Mr. Hamilton was the principal and he had the upper grades. Pupils he taught that I remember were Lucy and Dan Mullen, Don Jones, Clarence Patnoe, Lewis Smith, Susan Brodball and Ida Christensen. Kids in our class that I can remember were Myrtle Marshall, Clyde Kelsh, Clyde Ozanne, Thelma Smith, Louise Van Valkenburgh, Lyle Cummings, Ralph Perry, George Whitt, Beulah and Raymond Hansen and Penco Pancoff. Others in the room were Carlos and Ronald Van Valkenburgh, Ruth Cousins, a Hanson boy and the Brown twins.

That fall there was a Frontier Days celebration in town. I believe the race track was one block east of the old school house, where the present school is now. We also had a fair. The fair was held in the fall after school had already started, as I remember going down to see the exhibits where the Masonic Hall is now. At that time it was a hotel but not in use. My father had several items on exhibit.

Some of the names of people in White River at that



time that I can remember were Ted Rohn, who was sheriff, Jack Dress, Pat Patterson, John Hight, Tom Cameron, Eric Brodball, Bob Jones, Jay, Archie and Bob Pearsall, Mrs. Spear, Mr. and Mrs. Tomsik, Jesse Brown, Grandma Brown and Thomas Green.

Some of the Indians I remember were Joe Running Bear, Lewis Chasing Crow, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bordeaux, Francis, Susie, Mary and Rose. The Bordeaux lived south of us on the river. Their log house is still there. Mr. and Mrs. Broken Legs, Jimmie and Sarah Bordeaux, Katie Red Wing, Spotted Elk, Big Face, Brave Bear and White Bear.

Mrs. Schwartz ran a restaurant in the back of Pat Patterson's pool hall. I stayed with her sometimes. I remember going with her to the court house to church. This pool hall was located on the east side of the street where later Herman Brier had a garage. Al Moorhouse ran a garage there in the 20's.

We started having church and Sunday School in our neighborhood during the homestead days. It was held in the homes of Beilkes, Schwartzs, Briggs, and the MacDonalds.



Earlier picture of MacDonald family

Later on the Congregational Church was built in the Happy Hollow neighborhood. We attended there and Rev. Van Valkenburgh was the minister. Shortly after that, Rev. Fred Richards came and started the Methodist Church in town. Then we attended there because it was closer. At first we went to Sunday School in the schoolhouse and later in what was the pool hall, west of the Chris Anders garage. My father's funeral was held there in February 1919 before the new church was finished.

During the summer of 1914 my sister, Margaret, was bitten by a rattlesnake. Father had asked Margaret and Roddy to pull some suckers out of the corn field and throw them over the fence nearby to the pigs. They hadn't been in the field very long when we heard them screaming that Margaret had been bitten by a snake. It was during dog days in August and the snake gave no warning. She was struck on her ankle. Mother put on a tourniquet and then sent Albert and me to the pasture to get father, who was mowing hay. We ran after him and called and called, but he was traveling in the opposite direction and the mower was making so much noise he couldn't hear us at first. Finally he heard us and ran to the house. He sent Merle after Beilke's horse and buggy. While we were waiting for Beilkes to come, Merle and Roddy went back to the corn field and killed

the snake. It was coiled by the side of a large tumble weed and it had eight rattles and a button. Merle drove the team and buggy and father held Margaret, who was in dreadful pain. They took her to the Tomsik Hotel and a Doctor Pugh, who homesteaded west of town, treated her. Mrs. Schwartz stayed with her that night. Margaret eventually became unconscious and died early the next morning. Margaret's funeral was held at the Tomsik Hotel. She was buried in the White River grave yard next to Sam Brown. She was the second one to be buried in the White River cemetery. Rose Peters, Nellie and Ida Spear were pallbearers.

One day when Carrie was still small, she came around the house and told mother there was a big worm on the other side of the house. Mother went to look and there on the north side of the house was a big rattlesnake, all coiled up and hissing at the cat.

My brother, Raymond Emerson, was born February 4, 1914. Paul Beilke's boy, Harlan, was also born that winter. On February 14, 1914, my father had a birthday and the neighbors came to spend the evening. While they were there, it began snowing quite hard and night set in. They were afraid they couldn't find their way home in the blinding snow so they decided to stay all night. Adolph Kloney, who had only a short distance to go, decided he would try to make it home. He had to go through the pasture after he left the buildings, then down the draw until he came to a gate. Then he would follow the draw a little bit farther before climbing a hill to his shack. He walked and walked, until he realized he was lost. Finally he came to a fence, he followed it around the pasture until he saw our light. He came back and decided to stay all night with us too. Those who stayed with us were Mr. and Mrs. B. R. Briggs, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Beilke, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Schwartz and also Adolph Kloney. Sime and Paris Fridy had gone back to Pennsylvania that winter and we were looking after their stock.

At first we had just one fairly large room. Later we built a bedroom on the north and built a cellar on the east. This cellar had a sod roof on it. Sometime later we took off the sod and built a kitchen over the cellar.

Our first chicken house and barn were straw sheds. Later we built a barn and chicken house out of lumber. In 1919 a spark from the chimney set a hay stack on fire and it and our barn burned down. We built another barn north of that spot.

We had a coffee mill and a small hand grinder which we used to grind our corn and wheat. We bought coffee beans in bulk and ground them as we needed them. We ground corn to get cornmeal to make cornbread, which we called Johnnycake, and for corn mush. The coarse cornmeal that we sifted out was saved for the little chickens. Sometimes we ground wheat to use in whole wheat bread and wheat cereal. You could set the grinder for fine, medium or coarse ground meal. We seldom used it for fine as it turned very hard. Several of the neighbors also used it to grind their corn into cornmeal.

Mother baked bread, usually two or three times a week. We bought packages of yeast cake which were hard and square, made with cornmeal and hops. Mother generally cooked a potato, mashed it, and put it in luke-warm water with a little sugar. She then added the yeast that she had put to soak in the afternoon. She generally mixed the sponge before retiring at night. In the winter-time she wrapped the container and the sponge in the boys' sheep-lined coats to keep it from getting chilled.





**Branding in early days**

She usually baked about eight loaves of bread at one time the next day. Nowadays women have quick acting yeast or get their supplies from the bakery.

We churned five or six pounds of butter a week also. The first churn we had was a tall crock with a dasher (that was a long handle one lifted up and down). We had a wooden bowl and paddle to work the buttermilk out of the fresh churned butter, and the salt in. Later we had a keg-like wooden churn that fit on a frame. One could turn it around and around by a hand crank. We made a lot of cottage cheese out of the skim milk, keeping it on the back of the cook stove until it got to just the right temperature. Then we drained off the whey and seasoned the cheese with a little salt and cream. When we had plenty of cabbage, mother made a large crock full of sauer kraut. In the fall, father and the boys would pick potatoes for Jim Mitchell. In return we would get a wagon load of potatoes for our winter use.

For lights we had two kerosene lamps and a lantern. We had to keep the chimneys of the lamps clean if we wanted much light. The lantern was used outside, in the barn, or for trips to the cellar. We didn't use the lamps much in the summer. Our stove was a cast iron range, with four lids on the top for cooking, and it had an oven for baking. We usually burned wood but used a little coal in the winter when it was severely cold. Our 160 acres of land did not have much timber on it so we bought our wood from the Indians. They had to get a permit from the boss farmer to sell the wood. We also bought fence posts from the Indians.

For our beds some of us had bed-ticks filled with straw. One of the beds had a feather tick. Our pillow was called a bolster. It was made like a long pillow, to fit the full width of the bed. (Homesteaders saved and sorted the feathers when dressing chickens, to make feather pillows, ticks and feather-quilts. W.R.) We would put in fresh straw when the bed ticks needed it, also shook up the ticks occasionally to make them more comfortable. Two of the bedsteads were wrought iron. One was a folding bed with a cotton mattress that folded up with the bed during the day—similar to the rollaway beds of today.

We raised hogs and did all of our own butchering. We smoked the meat in our smoke house after the meat had been cured by soaking in a brine solution of water, salt and salt peter. Once in a while we had a rabbit or a prairie chicken.

The river was our main source of recreation in the warm summer months. We bathed in the river, had picnics and did some fishing at the mouth of Schwartz Creek. We never caught many fish and the ones we did catch were usually pretty small.

The first summer we were there, the wild fruit was abundant. Paris Fridy brought us some buffalo jelly, which was very good. Mother decided she would make some. She boiled the fruit and it turned milky-looking, so she threw it away. When Paris came over again, she told him about it. He told her that it would do that every time but to go ahead and cook it anyway.

We used the wild fruit mostly for juice and jellies. Our Grandmother Hetrick had a large orchard. She dried apples, elderberries, peaches and pears and mailed them to us. They were our main source of fruit. One year she sent us a barrel of apples but they spoiled at the depot in Murdo before they could freight them to White River, so we never got them.

The school year of 1914-15, Albert started to school. Others who joined were Roscoe Ozanne, Jack Melvin and Buster (Leroy) Marshall. Miss Myrtle Mullen was our teacher.

The school year of 1915-16, Julia started to school. Those in her class that I remember were Florence Patnoe, Helen Hight and Sarah Bordeaux. Miss Myrtle Mullen was our teacher the first half of the year. Miss Mary Owens finished the year and taught the next year of 1916-17. Miss Mary Brodball was Merle's teacher in the year of 1915-16. The following year we got a country school which was built near Fridy's place. Carrie was old enough to go to school by then and Merle was in high school. Chris Buums had moved down by the river and Ruth also went to our school.

On May 3rd, 1916, Sime Fridy got married. He went to Valentine, Nebr., and met the future Mrs. Fridy, who came by train to Valentine from Maytown, Pa. They were married at Valentine and came home to White River with a team of mules and wagon. Beilkes had moved away by then, so mother got Beilke's shack ready for Fridys to live in. Mother also gave them a reception when they arrived. She invited neighbors from the Pure Water district where Sime had homesteaded, and also the people from the Schwartz Creek neighborhood. Before this, she had each neighbor piece a quilt block and they had several quilting bees while putting the quilt together. Mother gave Fridys the quilt on the night of the reception. They lived a short time on the Beilke place, then Sime built a new house on his half section of land south of our home.

The school year of 1917-18, the four Bentz children came to our school because they did not have a school-house in their district. Their names were Helmuth, Hilda, Benjamin and Edna. Mrs. Helen Fridy was our teacher. Later on, others came to our school until they got school started nearer to their own homes. They were Everett and Helen Hale, Katherine and Melvin McCauley (his father was postmaster at the Neville Post Office), two Delany girls and Addie and Clara Harrison. Clyde and Roscoe Ozanne came from the Ring Thunder district so we had a large school for a while. Mrs. Fridy taught two years, then the teachers were Miss Gale, Miss Helen Grey, Miss Emma Teutsch and Mrs. Helen Durman.

Once there was an ice jam on the river by the Broken Legs crossing. Mrs. Fridy took us down to see it. The large cakes of ice were piled high, entirely across the river from one side to the other. We could usually



hear, at our place, a loud roaring when the ice went out in the spring.

My brother, Russell Donald, was born June 15, 1916; my sister, Helen Marie, on June 12, 1917; and another brother, Charles Orville, on July 30, 1918.

One year we had a Fourth of July picnic down by the mouth of Horse Creek. People that attended that I remember were Broods, Hubers, Buums, Asburys and the MacDonalds. Most of the time the picnics were held at Buums. They put up ice and always had home-made ice cream. Sometimes during the summer the MacDonald family would go over to Buums during the evening and have ice cream and cake. In 1917-18 we had square dances in the neighborhood from one house to another on Saturday nights. Fred Trautman played the fiddle, Loyd Wagner the guitar and John Gretschman did the calling. Attending the square dances were Mr. and Mrs. Chris Buum, Mr. and Mrs. Neil Emerick, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Valburg, Lee Valburg, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Schwant, Fred Trautmans, Loyd Wagner, Mr. and Mrs. John Gretschman and the MacDonalds. Later on others were Mr. and Mrs. Ed Korb, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Neiman, Mr. and Mrs. Art Blackburn, Lonnie and Edna Tucker, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Stevens and Jess Slagel.



**The Emerick family in front of White River courthouse.**

One year we had a terrible prairie fire. The fire started south of us down by Mission. We had a corn field south of the house and the fire burned up to the corn field. Then the wind changed and the fire went northeast from the corn field across Adolph Kloney's corner and through Schwartzs'. The fire burned all around Kloney's shack. Schwartzs were unaware of the fire until it was upon them. Flames could be seen when the fire went over the hills even if the fire was a long distance away. Father hitched up the team thinking we might have to cross the river to escape. Fortunately we didn't have to. The fire never stopped until it reached the road between White River and Wood. Charlie Bordeaux had an iron-grey horse that got caught in the fire. The horse ran around for years afterwards with big scars where the hide had been burned off his back and legs. There was a flat southeast of our place called Lodgeskin Flats. My father leased it and put up hay there for a number of years. There was a prairie dog town there, too. The year of the fire, he had put up hay there but he had already hauled most of the hay in and stacked it by the barn. Lodgeskin Flat never had a nice crop of hay after the fire, as long as we lived there.

Sime Fridy bought a team and surrey from Mr. Pickard. Mr. Pickard had used the team to carry the mail between Murdo and White River. Sime called his team Black Feller and Red Feller. One year we had gone to town for the Frontier celebration. We took in

a wagon load of watermelons. Sime came over to my father and said, "Mac, they are having a wagon race next. Why don't we enter, using my team and your wagon?" So, they unloaded the watermelons into a pile on the ground and went into the race. There were three entries running, with two men to a wagon. Father and Sime were the last to get started. When they got going, they passed one wagon and were gaining on the other when the wagon tongue came out of the neck-yoke ring. The tongue hit the ground, tipping up the wagon, and throwing father and Sime out of it. Father was knocked unconscious; Sime sprained his ankle and the team ran away.

During the Frontier Days celebration, the Indians camped all around the town in tents. They also camped across the river by the mouth of Schwartz creek when they celebrated the Fourth of July. They set up their tents in a big circle, and had a large squaw cooler in the middle. (A squaw cooler was four or more posts set in the ground about ten feet apart to form a square. A roof of interwoven tree branches covered this, and the Indians could sit in the shade and see what was going on. The size and shape of these squaw coolers varied according to the whim of their builders. Squaw-shades like these can be seen in use near the Indian homes on the Rosebud Reservation today. They compare in design with the city man's carport. W. R.) We MacDonalds could hear them dancing and pow-wow'ing late into the night.

In the fall of 1918 my father planted a lot of navy beans. We had a good crop, and had a large bin of beans, but they went down in price and we couldn't sell them, so we had lots of beans to eat. Dad had planted them because there had been such a demand for them during the war. We threshed the beans by hand, pulling the vines and hauling them into place by the wagon load. We dumped them into a large pile on a piece of canvas. We beat them with flat sticks until the beans fell out of the pods. We cleared away the sticks and leaves; then poured the beans from one bucket into another when a good wind was blowing, to blow away the chaff and dirt. That was the homesteaders way of growing and preparing much of their own food, instead of buying it in a store.

Times had changed by 1918 along Schwartz Creek. Beilkes had left and Schwartzs had moved to town. Adolph Kloney had gone to war, and died of the flu. Merle wrote the Schwartz Creek News for a while, but after the people began to move away the news became scarce.

In the 1930's they built an Indian Day School at the mouth of Schwartz Creek. It was called the Horse Creek



**Three White River Teachers and Indian Dancers**



Day School, but was discontinued later. They had a day school southwest of town many years before that. Ralph Perry's father and mother were instructor and caretaker. There was also a dipping vat there where they dipped I. D. cattle. There was a nurse's cottage and an "issue" station, but all these buildings are no longer there.

In the year 1919, in March, my brother, Albert, was shot accidentally while three of the boys were out hunting rabbits. He died at 5 o'clock the next morning. Dr. Kimble came from Murdo, but Albert had lost too much blood. We didn't have a funeral service. We had a mild winter that year, and the flu epidemic was real bad,

so Mr. Hodges, the undertaker, thought it best not to have a crowd at the service.

That was the winter that a lot of cattle died of anthrax, also.

In the summer of 1919 we had a nice field of wheat. Jess Slagel had a threshing machine and did our threshing that fall. We usually fed up all of our grain, but we did sell a little to our neighbors for seed sometimes.

By this time it started to get dry and the dust would blow, and we couldn't raise good gardens anymore.

Many years have gone by since I lived on Schwartz creek, but I still remember our friends and the happenings of the homestead days.

## The Lady Who Named Norris

By Winifred Reutter

John Weich wrote and told us the story about how the town of Norris got its name. He said that his sister-in-law, Margaret Congar, had suggested the name "Norris," so we located her to find out the details.

He was right about her suggesting the name. This was also the name of his son, and Miss Congar's middle name. She had given herself the middle name of Norris because it was her mother's maiden name.

Margaret Congar came out to Black Pipe Creek in September 1908 to act as a private teacher for Putnam's son, Alva. Putnams were operating a store near the Black Pipe Issue Station.

They had just recently built a store building at a new location and were applying to the Government for a Post Office.

Mr. Putnam remarked that the new store was now completed except for a name and "you girls can pick the name." Mrs. Putnam and Margaret Congar considered several names. Margaret suggested "Murphy," and Mrs. Putnam said, "I like your middle name, Norris."

So, Mr. Putnam sent the two names in, and the Government selected the name Norris, and Norris it is to this day.

Margaret Congar later married Robert McCormick. They have three children, Marie, Lois and Albert.

The McCormicks live in Valentine, Nebr., and Mrs.

Margaret (Congar) McCormick still remembers the days she spent with the Putnams and the part she played in the town getting her name, which was also the name of her nephew.



Mr. and Mrs. P. H. Putnam, 1909.  
(Blanche Kaufman picture)



Margaret "Norris" Congar McCormick of Valentine, Nebr., and her family—husband Robert McCormick, son Albert, and daughters Marie and Lois.



Morford, crossing Big White River on cable car.  
(Blanche Kaufman picture)





Putnam Pioneer Store, 1909. Grandpa Jorgensen,  
Putnam and son Alva, and Grandma Jorgensen.  
(Blanche Kaufman picture)

## Early Days In Mellette County

By Laura Powers Owens McDermott

My father, H. W. Powers, was one of the early settlers in your part of the country and I spent much of my life in Mellette County. So I thought you might like to know of some of my experiences as a girl.

My father came to South Dakota with some of his brothers and a brother-in-law, J. A. Brown, and family. They came by covered wagon, driving their livestock, and settled first close to Tripp, S. D. One uncle stayed there and spent the rest of his life in that community. They had come from Centerville, Iowa, where my father was born.

In 1892 my uncle, my father and some other relatives came on farther West, also by covered wagon. My uncle either built or bought the store at Westover which he ran for several years.

My father married and lived around Westover until his wife passed away, leaving him with five small children. Then he moved back to Oacoma where he met my mother and married her.

I was born in 1904 and one of my earliest memories is of visiting my uncle, J. A. Brown, who by then had a store—later, in 1911, called Redwing—on the Little White River about one mile west of where the town of



Looking north on White River Main Street. Note, most of buildings still under construction.



White River now stands. At this time I was probably about four or five years old. This is my first memory of being in a store. Also, it was the first time I was ever close to Indians and believe me I was scared of them.

The store was a two story building and after White River was started it was moved up on the flat to town and is now the print shop. (J. A. Brown moved a small building up to the corner where the drug store now stands. In this he kept a store and the first Post Office in White River in June of 1911. Later this building was moved west and in 1912 a large two story building was built by him to house his store and the White River Post Office. This building has been torn down, and the spot is now the location of the Hiatt Ranchland Drug Store. W. R.)

Also my brother-in-law opened the first garage. His name was Chris Anders. My sister, Ada Marshall, had the first bakery and cafe in White River.

My next trip to Mellette County was several years later. Due to a short hay crop, my father decided to winter the cattle on my brother-in-law's place in southwestern Mellette County, in the Ringthunder neighborhood. We again made the trip by covered wagon, and drove the cattle. I think it took nearly a week in the early fall. It was my first experience at camp life, and one which I thoroughly enjoyed. As I remember this place, it was about 15 miles from White River. There were hay stacks everywhere that fall—and such grass I'd never seen! There were some terrible prairie fires that year, but none close to us; and there were good fire guards plowed all around us. But I can remember yet how the skies were lit up at night by fires, and how my father and brothers spent many a night and day, going to fight the fires. Sheds for the stock were built of poles. The framework was covered with woven wire. Around the walls another strip of woven wire was placed, with hay packed between, to make sheltering walls for the stock. Poles and wires supported a hay roof.

We lived in a two-room house, and I will never know how we managed. The next spring we went back to our home in Lyman County, but my folks wanted to sell out and go back West. In 1915, they sold their home and moved out to Mellette County where we remained until my father's death in 1940. This time we moved onto a place four miles southeast of White River on Schwartz Creek. From that home I rode horseback to school in White River while the weather was nice. I stayed in town with a sister, Mrs. Anders, when it was stormy. Some of my early teachers were Myrtle Mullen, Roy Raffensperger, Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Gerig.

It was while we lived on Schwartz Creek that my

mother was bitten by a rattlesnake. She was working in the garden quite a ways from the house. A rattler, hidden under some melon vines, struck her just below the knee. She screamed to me to run to the house for help. Luckily my father and brother were home. My father sent my brother for a doctor. Then he grabbed the soda and kerosene can, and we ran back to my mother. By this time she had made it part way to the house, but was so sick she had sat down under a tree. Father immediately cut open the bite and sucked out all the poison he could; then applied kerosene and soda packs, and we got her to the house. There he gave her some brandy and we put her to bed. We couldn't get the doctor from Murdo, and the doctor from White River was away. We did what we could, and after several days she started to recover and finally did. To the day of her death her leg was sort of black and blue. At times it swelled so that she could hardly walk, but she lived until 1935.

It was also there that I attended my first Indian pow-wow, and the old-time Indian dances, and I saw a dog roasted on a stick over an open fire.

Two of my brothers, Tom and Walt Powers, were among the first group of boys to leave for the army in World War I. White River was really patriotic, and sent the boys off with a big celebration, including parades and a dinner in the town hall, which I think everyone in the community attended.

While the boys were gone, my father found it was too much for him to take care of all of our stock. My mother was sick so much that he sold most of his stock and we moved to town. He left what stock he owned at my brother, Tom's homestead, north of White River. When the boys came home after the war was over, my father bought Tom's homestead. And that was my home until I married Robert Owens in 1921, and moved to his farm north of the Paleck school in the Cody district.

During the flu epidemic, I lost two very dear friends, Mrs. Richards, the minister's wife; and Mrs. Sam Brown. This was a very hard winter, and must be remembered by most of the old timers. We had so much snow—and it was very cold. Everything such as schools and churches, were closed by the health department for weeks. No one could go into a store or public place without a mask over his face.

I have many memories of living in Mellette County and could probably write a book by myself but will leave some things for others to tell. My one wish is to return sometime to spend a while there, looking up old friends who still mean very much to me. Robert is gone now and I'm married again. I will never forget my early days in Mellette County.



White River Courthouse  
("Nearly built, let's rest.")



# Mellette County Memories

## MELLETTE COUNTY MEMORIES

By Winifred Egleston Reutter

My parents, Fred and Dessie Egleston, homesteaded in Mellette County, in what later became the Cody neighborhood, on SW 30 42-27. Dad registered at Gregory in October, 1911, but failed to draw a number. His brother, Will Egleston, did, and learned later that a homesteader near by wanted to sell out. So dad bought that relinquishment and homesteaded. My folks lived there the remainder of their lives. Dad passed away December 8, 1927; and mother, July 9, 1940. Since then, my brother, Wesley has owned it, so the Egleston homestead is still in the Egleston name. Dad came up from Iowa in 1912 to establish residence, coming with the stock in an immigrant car to Murdo, S. D.

I can't remember coming to Mellette County, but according to mother's little black notebook, she, my brother Wesley, born March 26, 1913, and myself (Cleo) Winifred, born March 10, 1909, arrived in Winner, S. D., from Iowa, June 13, 1913. Dad met us with a team and buggy.

Arriving on the homestead at dusk, Dad suggested that Mother stay in the buggy while he looked inside the shack to see if any rattlers had crawled in on the dirt floor. That was enough for Mother. She didn't want to risk going into a snake infested shack in the dark, so we went on over to Uncle Will's to spend the night. And that is how it happened that I spent my first night in Mellette County in a sod house. They had a dugout with sides sodded up, and a board front.

People homesteaded for different reasons. It's like the story of the artist, preacher and cowboy, who looked at the Grand Canyon for the first time. The artist said, "What a picture that would make!" The preacher said, "What a marvelous handiwork of God!" And the cowboy said, "What an awful place for a cow to get down in!" Some homesteaders worked hard to build a home; some filed just to get land to re-sell at a profit; and others only homesteaded for fun and adventure, then soon went back East or on to other places.

One of my earliest childhood memories is of watching the white clouds in the blue Dakota skies. It took

very little imagination to see animals, castles or other wonderful things in their ever-changing shapes.

I still remember my first school Christmas program. Noah Gerig was the teacher. I received, not just one gift, but two, and both were absolutely luxury items—a penny pencil and an orange.

The homesteaders were long on courage, but short on cash, and presents were rare. I can remember my dad telling me that although I wouldn't get a boughten gift for my birthday (March 10), he thought the meadowlarks would sing especially for me that morning. To this day, I listen on my birthday morning in hopes that the Dakota meadowlarks are singing for me. That memory is my precious heritage.

Homesteaders depended on the Lord, themselves and their neighbors, and not Uncle Sam. They knew that the best place to look for a helping hand was at the end of their own arm. They invented, repaired or hand-made nearly everything. "Do-it-yourself" was not a hobby for them, but a way of life. They had fires, blizzards, good times and bad. Sometimes they had chickens to eat, and sometimes only feathers. The ones in trouble (then as now) were the ones with a beer income and a champagne appetite.

They had problems, like stray stock, boundary lines and politics. Occasionally, neighbors got along like two tomcats, tied by their tails, and hung over a fence. But those few incidents will be remembered too long without being mentioned in this book.

The homesteaders who stayed, managed somehow. They wonder now, themselves, just how they did it. Like the frog in the hole they just had to do the impossible so they did it. A frog had fallen into a deep rut in an old wagon trail. He jumped and jumped but he could not get out. His frog friends tried but they could not help him out. Sadly, they bid him farewell and went their way. Next day, they met this frog in the grass and asked in surprise, "How did you ever get out of that hole?" He answered, "Well, I just couldn't jump out, then I looked up the road and saw a wagon coming, so I HAD to get out and I did." That little extra jump



Former Atwood place, now the home of Paul and Winifred Reutter.





Paul and Winifred (nickname Cleo) Reutter  
and daughter, Rose, 1954.

or ability, was often needed by the Mellette County pioneers.

Paul Reutter and I were married June 11, 1933. We lived in Washabaugh County eighteen months, then in Jackson County. Our daughter, Rose, was born there March 27, 1937, and we moved back to Mellette County April 19, 1938. We rented, later bought, the NE 32 42-27, the former Harry Atwood homestead. We lived through the Dirty Thirties, black blizzards, as the dust storms were called, mormon cricket and grasshopper plagues and drouth years. During those dry years, Mr. Leo Storms told us that his corn was so small and puny that

by the time he got through picking his few nubbins, he could tie his shoe laces while going downstairs.

Mellette County is at it's best in the springtime; a new carpet of grass is decorated with wild flowers. Cranes are calling overhead, wild ducks quack along the creek and the grouse are booming on the flats. New Hereford calves dot the green hillsides and the prairie birds are singing everywhere. Like the homesteaders, we remember the past, enjoy the present and have faith in the future.

Mellette County, with it's wrong-way river—the Little White River—which flows north through it. With it's flickering northern lights. With the beautiful Dakota sunsets that are given for us to enjoy freely, every day. Mellette County—my home.

\* \* \*

#### SUNSHINE

Beautiful day at the dawning,

What will you bring to me?  
What shall I hear ere nightfall? ....  
What shall I feel and see?

To whom shall I give kindness  
In look or deed or word?  
And will I chance to be helpful  
To a man or beast or bird?

Oh Dawn! you be my example;  
Your purpose shall be mine.  
Like you, throughout my journey  
I will try to bring sunshine.

—Winifred Egleston, age 17, White River  
(now Winifred Reutter)

Printed in "Pasque Petals,"  
S. D. Poetry Magazine, 1926.

## Mellette Co. Homsteader, Still On His Homestead

By Mr. and Mrs. Cody Sinning

I, Cody Sinning, registered at Chamberlain, S. D., in the fall of 1911. I drew number 545 and in February 1912 came to White River where I worked in the (Kositzky) Rosebud lumber yard for about three weeks. Then I went back to Lennox S. D.

In the first week of April, 1912 I started back to Mellette County with a team of mules and my trunk.

I filed at White River on April 18 or 19, and located on the SE¼ 30 42-27. I hauled lumber from Murdo, and Clarence Wilson helped me build my first homestead shack about a week later. I have lived on this same location continuously for the past forty-nine years.

During the first year I freighted from Murdo to White River and Wood.

In October, 1912, I put up another small building and started a grocery store.

We got a lot of snow in September 1912, but after that had such mild weather that the neighbors had a Christmas dinner together, outdoors at Matt Richard's place. In January and February of that winter (1913) homesteaders were moving in, building houses, fencing and even putting up hay.

Herman Anderson had a homestead just east of mine and his shack was across the section line. We stayed

together, at my house, one night and it his the next night to save fuel.

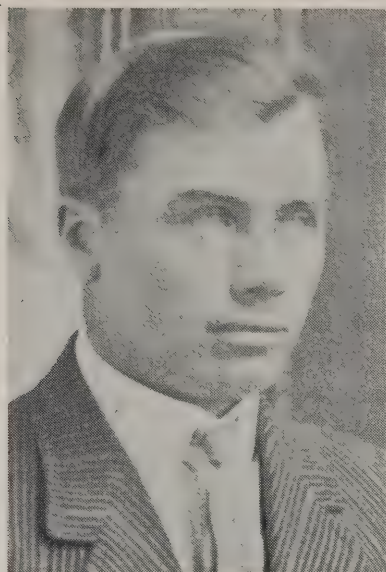
March 13, 1913, was such a mild, beautiful day that Anderson got spring fever and decided to clean house. To make the job easier he threw out everything that wasn't nailed down.

We stayed there that night and the next morning a blizzard was raging full blast. The only way we could have a fire, was to reach through the window to some posts he had leaning against the shack, drag them in and saw them up for fuel. There wasn't too much hardship, locally, that we heard of at that time as the storm started in the night and everyone was glad to be under cover until it was over.

On June 12, 1913, the Cody Post Office was established, and I was appointed postmaster. The "Post Office" was located in my home, consisting of a wooden pigeon-holed affair that held the mail for about thirty patrons at first. This Post Office material was later sold to be used in the Post Office at Kary, S. D., when my Post Office was discontinued in 1923. Much later the Kary Post Office was also discontinued and those boxes are still being used by my grandchildren to play post office with, as our daughter, Jean, married Wm. Kary.

Back in 1913 a regular mail carrier, Will Egleston, was hired to bring mail out from Wood every Saturday.





**Cody Sinning, one of the very few Mellette County homesteaders, still living on his homestead in 1961.**

I brought the mail out on Tuesdays when I went in for supplies for my store. That gave the patrons two days a week to get mail, buy a few groceries and catch up on the latest neighborhood news.

In August 1913, the neighbors helped build an addition to my house where school was held for two years and also Sunday school when weather permitted.

In the fall and winter of 1913 we got up a petition to organize the Cody township. My neighbor, Leo Liegerot and I went around to get signers. Fred Egleston, Leo Liegerot and I met with the county commissioners and Cody Township was organized in 1914.

While the neighborhood was going through the growing pains of establishing new homes and learning how to live in a strange country, it was not without the finer things of life.

Frank Tisdell, of Wood, opened up a one-chair barber shop in my living quarters and came out every Sunday to take care of the tonsorial needs of the men. Fred Egleston was the "Village Blacksmith" with his shop on his homestead and Will Egleston was handyman and did all kinds of carpenter jobs. Reinhart Week, Sr., was the shoemaker with his shoe shop at home. J. A. Bailey located three miles south, was cigar-maker and photographer.



**Alice and Evelyn. The way the mail was hauled from Wood.**

And as usual, the school took an active leadership in social and educational affairs with Christmas programs, debates, pie socials, etc., that were well attended.

Mr. Moon, one of the homesteaders, had brought a tent along. After he had his house built he loaned out this tent for a Sunday school meeting place, until I got my extra room built on my shack.

Mrs. Glidden and Rev. John Keepers organized the Sunday school and held church services.

Much neighborhood visiting was enjoyed by old and new friends alike.

At times my animals were a source of amusement or concern in the neighborhood. One of my mules died and I took a lot of ribbing when I drove a saddle horse with the other mule to do some hauling. They were an unusual looking team, but I made several trips to town in double quick time with them.

On one trip to Murdo I got a Coach dog. He was a good watch dog and wouldn't let anyone touch anything of mine when I wasn't around. One of the neighbors, Shorty Scheurer, coaxed the dog out of the house so Shorty could get in to get warm. Then, because of the dog, he was afraid to come out again and had to wait in there until I got back. The dog finally got so mean that one day, when he followed me to Wood and White River, and then got lost, I didn't try to find him.

In 1915 I built my present house. One room was used for school and one for the store and Post Office. My living quarters were upstairs.



**New House (Cody Post Office), 1915**

In the fall of 1916 we had our first bad prairie fire. It started in our neighborhood about 10:00 a. m. and burned to Westover. We fought fire until 11:00 p. m. that night. All we had to eat during that time was some biscuits and coffee Mrs. John Smith brought us. A lot of hay was lost.

That night another fire started near Rosebud. The wind changed and a strong west wind fanned the flames all the way to the White Thunder Creek west of Wood.

In the spring of 1916 I got a little Ford roadster to do my hauling, and, as it turned out later, to do my courting also. I met my future wife, Miss Alice Boyden, who had come from Green Bay, Wisc., to spend the summer nearby on her father's claim. We were married in Milwaukee the following June and have made this our home ever since.

Some of the things that happened in the Cody neighborhood, though serious at the time, seem funny later on.

Ashmer Fultons had come from Deadwood, S. D., and knew nothing of poultry raising, but decided they want-





White River Band at Legion Convention, 1938. (Florence Sinning, front, sixth from right.)



New Westover Bridge, 1913  
(Went out in 1960)



Mary Norton, Leo Liegerot, Cody Sinning.  
Note barrel for table!



Sunday School in tent, 1913. Mrs. Glidden, Rev. Keepers, Atwoods, Richards, Fultons, Keepers, Mrs. Byrnes, and Cody Sinning.



Clara Byrnes and John with Harry McCoy



Cody's house, where he lived first and school was held. Post Office and store building at right. Cody Sinning, Anderson and Hamilton in front.





Mr. and Mrs. Cody Sinning, 1917

ed some chickens. They sent for a twenty-five chick-size brooder and put eggs in it to hatch. Luckily, I happened along to explain the difference between an incubator (that hatched eggs) and a brooder (to keep chicks warm). So they rescued the eggs before they were spoiled.

The Fultons had a cave with a small opening on top, just room enough to put a ladder down and get into the cave. One cold night, Mr. Fulton decided to sleep down there. So he took bedding, and a bucket of hot coals along to keep the place warm. He had told the family that he would get up early and start the fires. When he didn't show up they went to see what was wrong. He had passed out for lack of oxygen. They got him into the house and he recovered, but he was sick nearly all winter.

Mrs. Glidden and Mrs. Will Egleston were returning home from the Fultons, walking across country, one evening. Mrs. Glidden felt a cactus in her ankle and when she reached down to remove it, she was bitten on the hand by a rattlesnake. She jerked her hand up with the snake still clinging to it. She pulled the snake off and that tore open the wound so it bled freely. When they reached the house they used what home remedies were available, and also gave her a stiff slug of the so-called "Good old snake bite remedy." The next morning, George Boyden took her to White River to the doctor, who said the poison was all out of the wound.

One summer, Harry Atwood had a severe case of ivy poisoning. His wife didn't want to tell him that she didn't have any baking soda on hand for a dressing, which was their usual remedy. So acting on the theory that "what he didn't know wouldn't hurt him," she put on a generous amount of baking powder. No doubt the power of suggestion did him as much good as the proper medicine would have, and he never knew the difference.

During the first few years of our marriage, except for the war, everything went fine. We had good crops and lots of rain. So much rain that first summer, every time we went anywhere and a little cloud appeared in the sky, we had to hurry home if we expected to get there that day. Every time we went to Wood, our closest trading center, we had to unload and get our car out of the mud. There was a place where water seemed to seep out of the side hill and we'd get stuck every time. One day after such an experience, when we got to town they found a frog in our egg case.

For several years there were very good crops, but such low prices that I remember we sold eggs for six and seven cents per dozen. We traded wild plums for wheat valued at twenty-five cents per bushel. Some of the neighbors burned their corn for fuel because it was so much cheaper than coal. In the next years we had

the disheartening bank failures when we lost everything we had in the bank. With no funds left and bills coming in—bills that we had already paid weeks before and the bank had held up the checks—we were really hard up. Then followed the depression and dry years, when crops were poor or we had none. Cattle had to be sold to the Government for twenty dollars per head; we lost our home and later had to buy it back. The grasshoppers and Mormon crickets took over until even the trees stripped of their bark couldn't survive.

There were such deep cracks in the ground that one of the neighbors said her baby chicks fell into a crack and went so far down that they couldn't be rescued.

We had potatoes that grew into such odd shapes from pressure in the hard ground. Some were flat, some almost square, in fact any shape, wherever there was a little space they could grow in. And they were like Jack Benny's, some the size of marbles, others like peas and a lot of little ones!

It has been said that South Dakota is like a cow that gives a big bucket of milk and then kicks the pail out of your hand. In those pioneer years we had the bucket kicked over many times. But many times, also, the bucket was brimming full.

The extension service was a bright spot with its fashions, recipes, home management, stock judging, meat cutting demonstrations and entertainment. The club meetings were social events. And the wartime Extension Service Motto, "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without," made many of us see the possibilities of clothing and material on hand that we had thought had no more value.

We had the usual good time while our children were growing up. There were happy neighborhood parties and holiday celebrations. A trip to town was an event and we all made the most of our own entertainment. We popped corn, made candy and always had plenty of good reading material. The young people of the neighborhood rode horseback and explored the Little Badlands. Later, the people enjoyed the wonders of radio. And everyone attended the barn dances at Barcal's.

Many changes have taken place over the years. There are larger and fewer farms, improved crops and better livestock. The children have grown up and made homes for themselves. Many of the old settlers have moved away or passed on.



Mr. and Mrs. Cody Sinning and daughters,  
Marie, Florence and Jean



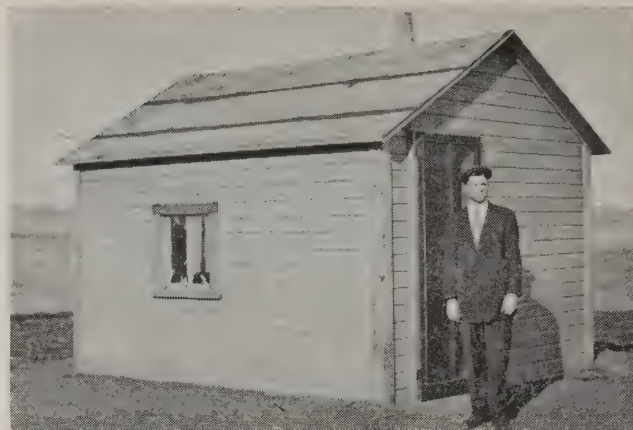
Our three daughters are married and two of them, with their families, are living in South Dakota. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kary (Jean), sons, Ace and Brant, daughters, Rae Beth and Anita Fran, live near Norris, S. D., on the farm where Wm. Kary grew up.

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Ramsborg (Marie) and daughter, Alice, live at Valley Springs, S. D.

Mr. and Mrs. Neil Strickland (Florence) and daughter, Luan, make their home at Lamesa, Texas.

Emily Johnson, now Mrs. Wayne Sanderson, Murdo, S. D., also made her home with us for three years, and Carl Johnson stayed there one year.

The only old timers still living in the Cody neighborhood, from all the original homestead families, are Wesley Eggleston, Winifred Eggleston Reutter, Sophia Smith Endes and Mr. and Mrs. Cody Sinning.



**Ernest Hamilton and his shack.**



**Herman Anderson's Shack**



**Fultons. Gordon Fulton on Cody's mule.**



**Homestead in Cody Neighborhood**



**McCoys. Mr. and Mrs. McCoy and Harry; also John Byrne.**



**Harley Lukens Claim, 1913**



# A White River School Teacher Remembers

By Matilda (Tarleton) Valandra

I sat down at the typewriter to set down some facts which might be of interest in a book of Mellette County Pioneer Stories, but I find that many of the names have already slipped away from me. I can recall a few incidents that happened in White River so long ago.

I was in White River during the flu. It began in October 1918. We closed the school and it remained closed for six weeks. During that time I nursed at the makeshift hospital we rigged up over Doctor O'Reilley's drug store. Mrs. Robertson and Mrs. McLean were two I remember who worked with me. We had beds for 24, I believe. They were separated by sheets strung on wire. Men, women and children were all cared for there. We lost one patient, a girl who was a victim of epilepsy and who went into a spasm when her fever was high. She lived for several days but never came out of the spasm.

The whole community worked to help take care of the sick. Men would go out to claims, if they saw no smoke coming from the chimneys. If they found any homesteaders sick, they rolled him in blankets and brought him to the "hospital" on a bob sled. Many were brought to us very ill with pneumonia. The only doctor we had was a woman, Doctor Schmitters. Drugs had to be brought from Murdo. At times we ran out of them and someone had to make the trip for them. Murdo was short of drugs, too, because the epidemic was very bad there also.

The treatment I used was to bathe the patient frequently with tepid water, especially the wrists and forehead, to reduce fever. I used a creamy liquid the doctor prescribed, on the chest. This was heated before application and covered with a piece of hot flannel. When I ran out of the prepared medication, I substituted turpentine and lard. The sheets hanging between the patients and around the walls in the "hospital" were wrung out of lysol water frequently to keep moisture in the air, and to keep an atmosphere of antisepsis for psychological reasons, I guess. Lysol water was kept boiling on the stove too. I think we served a million three-minute eggs. That was the main protein dish available. When a patient ate two soft-boiled eggs and some toast, we knew we had that case licked.

As soon as the patient was able to be taken home, another took his place. The beds were always full. The women who nursed, worked around the clock. I remember one time I never undressed for eight days and nights, except to bathe and change clothes.

The Indian patients were under the care of the Agency. They filled the Rosebud hospital to overflowing and many of them died in their homes. Mr. Blakely and I drove to the Rosebud Agency one time, to try to prevail upon the authorities there to issue caskets to the Indians every day instead of only on the two days a week when they opened the office. The Indians were having to keep the dead in their homes too long.

After the six weeks it was decided to reopen school. But many people still had the flu. Some of them had it at home. I slept in many homes, caring for the sick at night so the mother could get enough rest to carry on during the day. Among these homes, two were the M. I. Strain and the Charles Hutchinson homes, I remember.

Mr. Blakely was the county agent during the epidemic. He worked without rest, carrying water and wood, driving miles for medicine and bringing in pa-

tients. Doc O'Reilley was invaluable. His knowledge of medicine and his untiring efforts gave us the confidence we might not otherwise have had. I remember, he had an electric bell connected to a button upstairs in the "hospital" so we could call him during the night if we needed him. Rev. Richards, the Methodist minister, carried wood and water for us, too. He finally got the flu himself. I went to his home and cared for him a couple nights. He recovered but his wife contracted the disease from him and she died. They did everything for her. They had two sisters from Murdo, who were both trained nurses, to care for her, but to no avail.

Flora Freezman, Mary Williams and I were the teachers the first year I was in White River. Miss Mayme Miller was added the second year to the staff. I taught the high school subjects and eighth grade arithmetic. I think there were thirteen students in high school. Among them were Rose Tomsik, Clement Tomsik, Gladys Eaton, Merle MacDonald and Paul Van Valkenburgh. The last two were eleventh graders. They took two subjects with the tenth grade and I taught them Latin I and advanced algebra after school at night.



Mrs. Valandra is the author of a historical textbook, "Our State," used in South Dakota schools. It was written when her name was Matilda Tarleton Baker.

There were no discipline problems among the children in those days. All of them were eager to learn and seemed to drink up the knowledge faster than I could give it to them. I often recall their attitude and contrast it with the children I taught in the fifties.

One tragedy I remember during my stay in White River was the death of Albert MacDonald. The family had just had the flu. The boys were still weak as the result. Merle and his younger brother were out hunting rabbits. In some way, the gun accidentally discharged while they were walking along the field and the charge went into the leg of the younger boy. They got him to the hotel some way and turned him over to me. I ran for Doc O'Reilley and together we cut off the stocking and overall leg which were driven into the muscles by the strength of the charge. When we got the clothing cut, the leg came apart in my hands. We placed it on a pillow, covering it with an antiseptic powder and tried to make the boy comfortable while we began the long



wait for Doctor Kimble, who had been summoned from Murdo. The boy was so sweet, he never complained. He was so polite at all times, thanking us for the poor little things we were able to do for him. Finally the doctor arrived and amputated right there in the hotel. But the boy had lost so much blood, and suffered so severely from shock, that he died during the operation. I cannot think of him to this day without tears in my eyes.

Two people I will always remember with affection are Mother and Dad Jones, who operated a hotel which was our first home in Mellette County. They were all wool and a yard wide, and deserved a medal for service beyond the call of duty.

My name was Matilda Tarleton when I taught in White River. My father was a Methodist minister in the state. He was preaching at Miller, S. D. when I went to Mellette County. I married Byron Barker in 1921 at Rapid City, S. D. A son, Bob Barker, from that marriage is now the master of ceremonies on Truth or Consequences, N.B.C.-T.V. He lives in California, and that is the reason I'm here. Byron died in 1930. I married Louis Valandra in 1937 and we have a son, Kent Valandra, who is a senior at U.S.C. in advertising.

It was nice to hear from Mellette County and to know that I am still remembered at White River. I recall many friends from those days of long ago.

## White River — Early Memories

By Rose Tomsik Van Schaack

In the early 1900's the Rosebud Indian Reservation was opened for homesteads, one of the largest governmental land programs ever known. Mellette County, S. D., was part of this great venture.

When in 1911 a new town was being established in the central part of this county, many people, foreseeing a bright future there, hurried to establish businesses which would accommodate "the rush" of new settlers. One of these early businessmen was Jim Gray, who then owned a grocery store in Stamford, a small farming community about forty-five miles northwest of White River. He built a rooming house in White River and made arrangements with my parents, Klement and Augusta Tomsik, then living on Dad's homestead south of Stamford, to operate it for him. Thus we became one of the first families to make White River our home.

At that time there was a store near the river and southwest of the new townsite, owned and operated by J. A. Brown. The store housed a post office, which was called Redwing. There was some thought of calling the new town by the same name, but owing to the mail so often being missent to Redwing, Minn., a new name was decided upon. The town was called White River. Thomas Thompson took over the store, and the post office was moved to Brown's new store in town.

Dad and Mom went ahead to get settled, leaving my younger brother, Clem, and me with our older sisters, Helen, Lizzie and Emma, and our brother, Otto.

My earliest recollection of White River was a sunny afternoon when Clem and I came from Stamford to join our parents in our new home. The trip was one never to be forgotten, as we had our first ride in an automobile, which was also the first we had ever seen. It was a shiny new brown car, had high red wheels with hard rubber tires and the motor made a loud popping noise when running. The day was rather hot and we stopped several times to put water in the radiator. When the man, driving the car, took the cap off the radiator, steam shot up several feet in the air, adding considerably to the excitement and enjoyment of our trip. The first stop was at the Big White River (we may have come this far with Dad's moving wagon); another was at the Little White River. At this point about one and a half miles from our destination, it was a rather swift stream, but easily fordable. After letting the car cool for a while, we crossed the river and continued on our way to the top of a hill where we saw a broad grassy flat, in the middle

of which sat three or four frame buildings and several tents of various sizes, white against the background of green.

Driving up to the nearest of the buildings—a rather long, plain-looking structure with a not very imposing front—we saw our mother running out to meet us. To us it seemed the very nicest place in the world! As she took us inside, we saw a large unfinished room with a long table against one wall. On the opposite side of the room curtains hung from the rafters, dividing the area into small compartments, each with a bed inside. The kitchen was at the back. Off the kitchen was a room which provided sleeping quarters for our family.

Later we found that the building just across the street and a little to the north was John Hight's store, the back part of which was used as living quarters for their family. The family, as I remember, consisted of Grace, the twins, Clarice and Clarence (Bud), and Helen. Charlie and Harry were married and living in homes of their own. As a general mercantile store, they handled the usual canned goods, yardage and staples. Besides these there were many items peculiar to the times such as kerosene lamps, lanterns and cans, horse collars, buggy whips, etc. We were to make many a trip there for groceries and other supplies. One of the things I remember best was the display of cookies in square tin containers, each box having a hinged lid on top and a glass window in front showing its contents. Clem and I often lingered here or near the candy counter, hoping Grace or Clarice would give us a stick of candy or a cookie. (They usually did to get us out from underfoot.) I remember getting gum in small round tin cans, the gum being in the form of a wafer a little larger than a quarter.

The tents scattered here and there offered temporary homes to those who were building or preparing to build. A block or so north of Hights Store was Giroux' tent, where meals were served to the public. It seemed about twenty feet square with large flaps on the front, opening to reveal a long table with benches at each side. The family lived nearby in another smaller tent. There were Louie and Mrs. Giroux, their daughter, Mabel, and sons, Ralph and Joe. Also living in tents were Judge and Mrs. McManus and son, Kenneth; and John Peters and son, John; and many others.

A short distance north of our place were two locators' offices, hastily built to provide headquarters for the men who helped the homesteaders locate their claims. Large



cloth signs' stretched full width of the buildings proclaimed in bold print their services. A few years later one of these was used to house the fire-fighting equipment of the town and another for a warehouse (Hodges).

As other buildings sprang up like mushrooms around us, we saw a remarkable transformation. A little to the north of us John Patnoe and a Mr. Klima built a pool hall. The Patnoe family had been neighbors of ours near Stamford, having lived on Jim Gray's place on Big White River. J. A. Brown and son, Jesse, built their store across the street north of Hight's Store, and the post office was in this store for several years. Later it was moved to the Gray building where we had lived. About this time, Giroux built a restaurant where their tent had been. A little farther north was C. E. Kell's law office.

Anticipating the needs of the homesteaders, Dad built a blacksmith shop in the same block and east of where we were living. He was to sharpen many a plowlay to be used in breaking the sod of the untouched prairie. Besides repairing farm machinery, wagons, buggies and harness, he would shoe the homesteaders' horses. Some of these, newly broken to work, proved to be almost more than he could handle. We always enjoyed watching the sparks fly as he shaped the red-hot horse-shoes over the rounded end of the anvil and fit them, still quite hot, to the hooves of the struggling horses. In a few years, Otto was old enough to be of great help with this and the work with the machinery. As he later became a mechanic, this early experience helped him considerably in his later endeavors.

To the south of Hight's Store, D. L. McLane built a drug store which was operated by "Bump" Reid, with Dick Hunt in charge of the prescription counter. Except for Dr. Pugh, who lived several miles out of town on a homestead, the nearest doctors were at Murdo. I remember when Dad had blood-poisoning, he went to Valentine for treatment.

Next to the drug store, C. F. Malven had a pool hall. His brother, Jack, helped in the operation of this as C. F. was kept busy with his surveying activities—later becoming county surveyor. Next to the pool hall was the Majestic Theatre which, short-lived as a movie theatre, soon became a temporary school and later C. L. Spear's Store. About a hundred feet south of Spear's were two smaller buildings; one of these was where the "Mellette County News" was first published. A Mr. Richmond, I believe, was the first editor. This served as a means of



**Mr. Tomsik and son, Otto, in front of their blacksmith shop, shoeing Joe Petranek's horse, which he is holding.**

publishing the proof-notices of the homesteaders as well as local and other news items. It was later moved into the west end of the White River State Bank. All of these buildings, with the exception of Dad's blacksmith shop, were on Main Street.

With the town growing so rapidly, Gray's was soon too small to accommodate the increase in business and Dad decided to build a hotel of his own. It was located north of the black-smith shop in the opposite side of the block. A two-story structure, it had six upstairs bedrooms, the lobby which also served as the dining room, the parlor, which was a large room off the lobby, and a bedroom in the main part of the building. In a lean-to on the back was the kitchen and another bedroom. A year or so later he added onto this: five upstairs bedrooms, a large dining room, kitchen and a bedroom downstairs, and moved the lean-to back to be used as a laundry room.

The bedrooms were furnished with a bed and a home-made washstand with a large china wash bowl and a flower-decorated water pitcher and a kerosene lamp. The rooms were not heated, since all heat was furnished by a large coal or wood heater in the lobby and the range in the kitchen. On cold winter nights a small Perfection oil heater would be set in the room for a while to "take the chill off." A tall chrome-based gasoline lamp with two mantles and a milkwhite corrugated glass shade furnished light in the lobby. It had a ring at the top so it could be hung from the ceiling or it could be set on the base which was also the supply tank for the gasoline.



**Tomsik Hotel Under Construction**



All the other rooms were lighted by kerosene lamps.

Mom spent much of her time in the kitchen preparing the meals and serving them family style to the boarders. The kitchen had a large coal or wood range equipped with warming oven and a reservoir to keep hot water always at hand. On the wall beside the stove was a coffee mill where just the right amount of coffee beans were ground each time she made coffee. The coffee beans came in one hundred pound burlap bags and had premiums packed in each bag. Some I remember finding were a hand-painted water pitcher, a casserole with chrome stand, and a stein with pewter lid.

Water for drinking and other purposes was quite a problem. At first the drinking water was supplied by a spring at the head of the draw two blocks or so southwest of where we lived at Gray's. This water was soft and seemed to harbor no germs but the supply was inadequate. Soon water was being hauled in fifty gallon barrels from the river. Usually two barrels were carried in a wagon. They were covered by a canvas held down by an extra hoop to keep the water from sloshing out, and held down by ropes to keep them from tipping when traveling uphill. A few wells were drilled but these proved unsatisfactory, the water being too hard to use. For years all the water for the town was hauled from the river. When the demand became too great to be supplied by hauling in barrels, large tanks were used and the water was stored in cisterns.

Fuel also posed a problem. Since we had a team and wagon, we would often buy wood from Indians living nearby. Mom would take Clem and me with her to Ned Bear Heel's place. It was about three miles west of town and had a squatty log house. In the yard was a sort of canopy built by setting four poles about seven or eight feet high in the ground about ten to fifteen feet apart to form a rectangle; then covering with a roof of poles covered with leafy branches. This provided shade on hot summer days and by placing a few flat stones to form a fireplace, could be used for a summer kitchen. In a pole corral nearby several horses stood, sleepily brushing flies with their long tails. We would ride back to town on top of a load of pole wood. Later we went with her, also with team and wagon, to Murdo (30 miles), bringing back a load of coal. We would go up one day, stopping at Westover for a short rest and lunch at noon, on to Murdo where we would stay overnight at a hotel, and go back home the next day.

Ted Rohn, our first milkman, lived in the southeast section of town, where he kept several cows. He brought the milk in a three-gallon can, which he carried slung over his shoulder. He used a quart measure to mete out into a pan or pitcher the amount of milk the customer desired. To simplify his book-keeping, he sold milk tickets, a dollar's worth at a time, collecting one for each quart of milk delivered.

There was a considerable amount of work involved in the operation of the hotel, and my sisters, being some years older than I, helped Mom with much of it. Helen soon married and moved to Murdo and later to Mitchell; and Lizzie worked away from home most of the time. Then I helped Emma with the work upstairs, sometimes filling the lamps with kerosene, but usually just talking to her while she made up the beds. Later, Emma worked at the telephone office while Mrs. Kent was manager.

While Dad had been building the hotel, others were busy, too. Across the street John Peters' had their cafe under construction. When it was partially completed,



The Tomsiks, 1912. Left to right, front: Clem, Mom, Rose, Dad; back: Otto, Emma, Lizzie, and Helen.

the other members of their family, Mrs. Peters and daughters, Emma and Rose, came over from Philip to join them. Mullens built a store north of Browns in the far corner of that block. East of Peters' "City Cafe" were two or three smaller buildings where the attorneys, R. V. Fletcher and T. S. Tripp, had law offices, and Bill Hines operated a barber shop. The Hines', with their daughter, Delilah, lived in back of the shop. Farther east in the corner of the block the "Jones Hotel" was built. There were Steve and Mrs. Jones, Grace and Don, other members of the family having married and were living elsewhere. Later the "Herrick Hotel" was built just across the street south of Jones'. On the east side of our hotel, set back a little from the street, the Northwest Bell Telephone Company built their office. I don't recall the first operator and manager; it may have been Mrs. Lundberg. Later, Mrs. Sime Kent became operator—in about 1914. Sime Kent lived on their homestead north of town and their son, Dean, lived with his mother in the telephone office, which also served as a residence for the operator.

Other business places built about this time (1912) were Ander's Garage, west of Brown's Store, and next to this a pool hall, built by a Mr. Dunwell. He and his wife and daughter, Nellie, stayed at our hotel for a time until rooms in the back of the pool hall were ready to occupy. Directly across the street east of Hights' Store was C. A. Joy's store. This later caught fire and burned most of the stock. Mr. Joy did not restock the store and moved away a short time later. The building stood vacant for a while till Fredericksons used it as a feed store.

In the block east of our hotel the county courthouse was built. For a time it served also as a community hall. Church services were sometimes held there and social functions such as box socials.

Two banks were soon built—one, the White River State, on the corner north of Hights' Store with Charles Hight as manager; and the Mellette County State on the corner east of Brown's Store. Robert Jones was manager of this bank, later assisted by John Sullivan as cashier. Mr. and Mrs. Jones and daughter, Dorothy, lived in rooms above the bank for a while, later moving to a house a block south of the courthouse.

C. F. Manson had a law office in the southeast corner of the Mellette County Bank building and soon became County Judge. When they moved to a house near us, I often took care of the Manson children, Rodney and Marjorie. I liked to take them with me on trips to Spears' Store where Rodney, at five years, surprised the clerks by reading the labels on the cans and cartons on the shelves. Though Marjorie had outgrown her perambu-



lator, I still gave her rides in it. On one of these trips something went awry, the pram got away from me and Marjorie landed on the ground at the bottom of the hill. Tears were shed by both of us and needless to say, such trips were discontinued.

Building materials were hauled by team and wagon for many miles, mostly from Valentine, Nebr., about sixty miles to the south. Those who had teams, hauled lumber for their own use, and later for others. Hopes ran high that the railroad would be built through White River, but years went by and the hopes never materialized. The first lumber yard, "The Rosebud Lumber Co." was located in the northwest corner of the block behind Mullens' Store. Later, another was established in the block with Dad's shop and was operated by Homer Searle and a Mr. Lundberg. They built four houses in this same block; two of these were occupied by their families, another by Dick Hunt's family.

By this time there were several youngsters in the neighborhood and we enjoyed playing hide-and-seek among the piles of lumber. Sometimes now on damp days the smell of cedar shingles or new lumber brings back memories of those times. On other days we would play marbles and root-the-peg (or mumble-peg), where each player does a series of tricks with a pocket knife and the loser has to pull a peg from the ground with his teeth. Otto put a turning pole beside the hotel and we tried all sorts of stunts on it; walking stilts was another favorite pastime. When Dad finished painting the siding on the hotel, we appropriated his five-foot saw-horses and twenty-foot ladders and made a teeter-totter. One of us would hold down the end while the other climbed the rungs to the top where he could look down upon several roof tops.

By late summer of 1912, many of the homesteaders were settled on their claims; others were just arriving. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. MacDonald and their family spent several days at our hotel while getting ready to move to their homestead. Getting supplies from town required many a long trip over rough prairie trails by wagon or buggy. Many would stay over a night or two at our hotel. I remember Carl Bickel, better known as Rattlesnake Pete, who always took time to tell Clem and me stories, usually about Bre'r Rabbit and the Tar Baby. There was Stanley Barnett, who rode a beautiful black horse, which he later raffled off and Otto was the lucky one to win it! Among other early guests were Col. Jordan, who lived near Wood and had the only apple orchard for miles around, also his son, Wm., who held one of the county offices for several years. Another was Miss Sadie Shives, our first county superintendent of schools.

Others of the homesteaders would often drop in to visit a while on their weekly trip to town. Will Eglestons, who lived in the Cody community, decided once they would take me home with them for a week for company. I'm afraid I proved to be somewhat of a disappointment, as I became homesick almost as soon as we reached their house. That evening they took me to a social at the schoolhouse and the next day we drove over to a neighbor's, Fred Leusman's. They had several children, including Sophia, a girl my age, and we had such a good time together that they decided to leave me there for a few days. When I returned to Egleston's, I had gotten over my homesickness and enjoyed the rest of my stay at their farm.

It was about this time that Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Eaton came to live in the hotel. They occupied two rooms near the back. Gladys, just my age, was the only

one of their children living at home, Bertha having married Frank Perry, and Floyd was working out. Mr. Eaton did construction work and later Mrs. Eaton taught a country school. It was while she was teaching that we, Mrs. Eaton, Gladys and I, took an interesting trip out to the Neville Store (operated by McCauleys) on school business. We started quite early on a sultry summer morning, as it was quite a long ride by team and buggy over the winding prairie road. We ate dinner with McCauley's and after Mrs. Eaton had finished her business, we started back home. We had traveled a few miles when we noticed thick, black clouds were gathering and soon it began to rain. Coming to a small house not far from the road, we stopped to find that Kate Didier was its owner. She generously invited us to spend the night since by then the wind was blowing and the rain was coming down in earnest. We gladly accepted and soon were cozily settled in the house. The rain beat on the thin roof over our heads, and the wind shook the small one-room house as though it resented its interference with its clean sweep across the prairie. That night Mrs. Eaton and Kate talked till the "wee hours" after going to bed, recounting all sorts of past experiences, Gladys and I listening until we fell asleep. The rain stopped during the night and the wind had gone down when we started home next day. There was nothing to break the stillness of the morning except the clop-clop of the horses' hooves and the occasional song of a meadowlark.

The first schoolhouse was situated about two blocks south and a half block east of Dad's shop, and was a tin-covered building about 24 feet square. Mrs. Charles (Edith) Hight was the teacher and the pupils that I remember were Ralph and Joe Giroux; Ernest, Ella and Clarence Patnoe; Willie and Elizabeth Hollenbeck; Robert and Vera Cummings; my sister, Emma, and brother, Otto, and me. I was in the first grade then.

In my second year (1912-13) the primary grades were



Fourth grade, 1914 - 1915, White River. First row, Vera Cummings, Gladys Eaton; second row, Robert Cummings, Clarence (Bud) Patnoe; back, Andy Smith.



moved to the Majestic Theatre building and Mary Coyle, who later became Mrs. Jim Wilder, was our teacher. I think Mrs. Hight taught the upper grades in the old school building. Clem started school this year. Construction on the new school house on the hill in the southeast part of town must have started in 1912 as when I was in the third grade we occupied that building. My teacher that year was Miss Reynolds. She taught the first, second and third grades and some of the pupils were Margaret, Florence and Roderick MacDonald; Louise and Carlos Van Valkenburgh; Howard Robbins, Thelma Smith, Dorothy Jones and Clifford Cummings. Lyle Cummings started the next year. In the Intermediate grades (1913-14) Miss Etta Cummings was the teacher and some of the pupils were Paul Van Valkenburgh, Merle MacDonald, Harold Malven, Mildred McLane, Kenneth Asbury, Andrew Smith, Ida Anderson and Gladys Eaton. A Mrs. MacDonald taught the upper grades and some of the pupils were Don Jones, Harlan Core, Everett Tripp, Lloyd Brown, Floyd Eaton, Lucy Mullen, and Louis Smith.

The next year (1914-1915) it seems Miss Mary Owens taught the primary grades, Miss Susan Brodball the intermediate, and Ernest Hamilton the seventh and eighth. Dean Kent, Ossie and Len Hamby were new pupils that year. As I was the only one beginning in the fourth grade (Margaret had died from a snake bite and Howard Robbins moved away), I was put into the fifth grade.

In 1915-16 Mrs. Adele Schroeder taught the Intermediate grades until the Christmas vacation when she resigned. Marble Eidsmoe taught until he went into the service in March or April then Mrs. Harbaugh finished out the term. Miss Myrtle Mullen taught primary this and the next year. In 1916-18 Noah A. Gerig taught seventh and eighth. A few high school subjects were taught to those who had finished the eighth grade.

The early settlers encountered many hardships besides the inconvenience of their daily life. In 1912 (I believe it was) there was an epidemic of diphtheria which claimed several lives. Three of the younger Patnoe children, Thelma, Irvin, and Alfred, died of the dread disease within a couple weeks time. Since there was no cemetery established at that time the Patnoe children were buried in the Indian Cemetery on the hill across the river, beside which stood the Indian Catholic Church. One of the Robbins children, a boy of four or five, died about the same time. He was buried in the southwest corner of the town, where later Charles Hight's baby who died when only a few days old, was also buried.

In March of 1913, we had one of the worst blizzards the prairie has ever experienced. The weather had been mild, with a promise of spring in the air, and stock had been turned out to graze. Suddenly without warning, it turned cold, clouds came up and with great force the wind and snow swept across the prairie in a blinding fury. All over, the people were hemmed within their tar-papered shacks and thin-walled houses, unable to get out. The stock huddled together looking for shelter; some finding it near haystacks or buildings but others, driven into the draws, were covered over by the fast drifting snow. Many smothered and froze there. Gus Legner, who had just come to White River and was staying at our hotel, had several work horses and young colts turned out into the pasture west of town. Most of them perished in the storm. Others lost cattle which were not found until the snow melted and uncovered them. When after several days the wind abated and the snow stopped falling people started "digging out." Dad



**Fifth Grade, 1914 - 1915, White River.**  
Front, Elizabeth Hollenbeck; second row, Kenneth Asbury, Harold Malven; back row, Paul Van Valkenburgh, Merle MacDonald.

shoveled through snow which was as high as the back door to get out. When we could go out to play we were told not to touch the telephone wires while sleigh-riding down the drifts by Stone's livery barn. The snow was piled all over the prairie and it was still too cold to venture very far from shelter. The trails were all buried deep with drifts and there was no traveling done for quite awhile. The mail which came overland from Murdo and Rosebud was held up for days.

But with the storm the winter seemed to have spent itself. Soon a chinook wind melted the snow and it disappeared almost as quickly as it had come. With spring came the wild flowers bringing color to the unbroken green of the new grass. I can still remember the delicate fragrance of the wild sweetpeas we gathered on the hillside west of town. On the slopes east of town pasque flowers grew in abundance in those days. There were sensitive plants, too, with their blossoms of pink pom-poms and leaves that folded together when you touched them. I've never seen these growing anywhere else.

As summer drew near other hardships came to plague the homesteaders. With hot, dry weather the grass turned brown and dry and prairie fires were an ever present threat. Often when a fire started all the men in town would be recruited for fire fighting; farmers would plow fire guards or build back fires, while others beat out the fire with wet sacks. Water usually had to be hauled in barrels for quite a distance. At night the red glow from the distant fires could be seen from town and later there would be miles and miles of black burned ground and dead livestock left in its wake.

The constant menace of rattlesnakes was one of the worst things with which they had to contend. If there was such a thing as anti-venom in those days, it was



unknown to us or impossible to obtain or administer; several persons were bitten by those vicious reptiles. One day, my friend and schoolmate, Margaret MacDonald, was brought to our hotel just after she had been bitten but the poison had spread to such an extent that all attempts to help her failed. She died a few days later. Her funeral was held from our hotel since there were no churches in White River at that time.

It was not until about 1916 that the Congregational Church was built with Rev. Van Valkenburgh as the first minister. In 1917, Rev. and Mrs. Fred Richards came from California to become pastor of the Methodist Church. Mrs. Richards organized the first campfire group in White River that fall. Some of the first Campfire girls were Gladys Eaton, Dorothy Jones, Eleanor Waltz, Geraldine and Irene Hutchinson, Laura Powers, Angie Turpin, Clara Bruce and myself. The new Methodist Church was built in 1918 or '19. The Legion Hall, built about 1915, was sometimes used by traveling evangelists to hold meetings. Before that, others held services at the court house or school.

One Sunday, each month, Father Groethe from St. Francis' Mission would come over to say Mass at the Indian church on the hill. He traveled by team and buggy, always wearing the long black cassock of the missionary priest and with his long flowing black beard was quite a picturesque figure. On these Sundays Dad and Mom would take us in the buggy to attend church there. Sometimes in warm weather we would walk the two miles crossing the river on the narrow swinging bridge. This bridge always seemed rickety and old to me, also not quite safe, sagging down with each step we took. We would walk very slowly until the last few feet when we would fairly run the rest of the way to reach solid ground again.

About 1916, my folks leased the hotel for a year to a man named Brown who later sub-leased it to J. M. Whitt. Dad moved the house from our homestead near Stamford onto the lot where the first school building had stood. The latter having been moved west of town on Pine Creek to be used as a country school. Since Bob Jones' lived just a short distance up the hill from us, Dorothy and I were together much of the time. Many winter evenings were spent in the warmth of the big base burner in their living room reading or listening to the Edison phonograph which used the cylindrical style records. I remember real well "The Green Grass Grew All Around" and "Roamin' in the Gloamin'," this by Harry Lauder. Each week we would look forward to the arrival of "The Youth's Companion" as Mrs. Jones would read the serials in it to us. Dorothy's Dad would often "top off" an evening by telling us a scary story. Dorothy had a Shetland pony and buggy which furnished us girls, Vera Cummings, Gladys Eaton, Dorothy and I, no end of fun. We were almost inseparable and on hot summer days, huge straw hats on our heads, we would walk to the river, don our bathing suits and go "swimming." Sundays we'd spend riding horseback or hiking to the river. The Cummings' moved to a ranch near Schamber about 1918 and later to Kadoka.

Entertainment for the community was quite varied. At first there were basket socials or spelling matches held at the court house or school. Later, in the Legion Hall, there were school plays, song fests and dances. Occasionally a travelling show would come to town, usually consisting of colored people who played, sang, and clogged through a novel and exciting evening. These shows often featured a trained bear. Also travelling

through would be an occasional "dog show." From ten to twelve trained Spitz dogs performed on the stage, doing various tricks on chairs, ladders, and other props. They were especially entertaining to the youngsters in the audience watching the antics of these talented performers.

In the summer there were picnics and watermelon feeds in the shade of the Cottonwood trees along the river. Mr. Wm. MacDonald would bring his wagon loads of the sweet, juicy melons for all to enjoy.

Every Christmas Eve a Community Christmas program was held at the Legion Hall with a huge tree beautifully decorated with popcorn, cranberries, tinsel and candles. Santa distributed candy and toys to all the children.

The really big event of the year was the Frontier Days Celebration. The first few years they included a fair with exhibits from throughout the county. The fairgrounds were located east of the schoolhouse and the White River Frontier Days came to be known as one of the biggest and best shows of this type in the country. Cowboys from far and near competed in the bronc-busting, bulldogging, caltroping and steer riding contests and often it was one of the local boys who won one of the coveted prizes.

The Indians took an important part in this celebration. They came from miles around travelling in light wagons carrying camping equipment, and pitched hundreds of tents and teepees south of town. The first day of the show began with a mock Indian attack at sunrise. At about ten o'clock the tribal dances began with all the Indians dressed in their colorful ceremonial costumes. The squaws formed a large circle inside of which the braves danced, weaving and stomping in the ceremonial dances of the Sioux. As the boom-boom of the drum and the jingle of their ankle bells mingled with the war chant of the braves; the squaws moved in a sidling shuffle around the circle and joined in the chant. At the fairgrounds in the afternoon there would be a very realistic sham battle. They would capture and burn a stage coach, scalp the driver and ride madly away with blood curdling yells. The man who drove the stage was Jack Doyle who painted signs when the Indians weren't chasing him.

During the three days of the celebration our hotel would be crowded from attic to kitchen with beds. Every bit of available space would be used to set up beds or cots to help accommodate the throng of people who came to see the show. After the first year or two, Mom didn't serve meals to the public and for these few days set up beds in the large dining room. The streets were filled with hot dog, kewpie doll and other stands. There were side shows, a tent with a cabaret and in the square was a merry-go-round and Ferris wheel. The voices of the street vendors mingling with the noise of the crowd could be heard far into the night. The dance at the Legion Hall in the evening attracted enormous crowds. An opening was cut at each end of the south wall of the hall and the floor was extended to include the space between the hall and Breier's garage (formerly Patnoe's poolhall).

On the last night as the crowd began to lessen, the dismantling began, and by noon of the next day the streets showed little sign of the activity there only a few hours before. The tents soon disappeared and the town settled down to its usual quiet existence.

During the summer the Indians held dances in the octagonal hall near the river. Built of plain boards, this



hall was about eighty feet in diameter and seven feet high, with a rather flat, black rubberoid roof which came to a slight peak in the center. Inside, in the middle of the hall was a huge stove used to cook the food for the feast which usually climaxed the dances. Before an election some enterprising politician would sometimes donate a beef to the Indians in hopes of winning their favor.

The Indian Issue Station was located about half a mile east of the dance hall. It was a large white frame building with a commissary at one end, and an office and living quarters for the boss farmer in the other. Out front was a long hitching rack. Here the Indians received their allotment checks, rations and other supplies, such as farm machinery and the barbed tin wire used for fencing.

Near by were the corral, dipping tank and chutes where their cattle were dipped and branded with the familiar ID brand. The first boss farmer I remember was Sam LaPoint, who was later replaced by Bob Emery. About a half mile north of the Issue Station was the Little White River Day School where the Indian children attended school. J. H. Perry was the teacher for many years.

With our entry into World War I, quite a number of young men from White River went into the service. The first to enlist were Floyd Eaton, Carl and Guy Bruce.

The day they left the school all the townspeople gathered at the Legion hall to give them a send-off. There were speeches and the crowd sang "Over There" and other songs so popular then. From time to time others were to leave, but somehow the memory of the first group stayed with me.

During the war there were all the activities pertaining to the times, such as Red Cross drives, including auction sales (where everything from rabbits to furniture was sold), benefit dances and box socials. Women and girls were knitting socks, sweaters and helmets to send over-seas to the "doughboys." Since there were no radios to bring us news, people would crowd the lobby of the post-office at mail time, waiting to get the daily paper, the Argus-Leader, with war news. I remember the sugarless days, the substitute flour we had to buy to get white flour—potato, or rice flour, corn or oat meal and others. The election of 1917, when an enormous pile of Russian thistles was burned in the court house yard during a political rally. The songs we sang, "How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm," "Pack Up Your Troubles," and "K-K-K-Katy."

The day the war ended there was great rejoicing. Someone started ringing the fire bell, and others kept it going while people poured out of the stores and shops, laughing and shouting for joy. The war was over and the boys would soon be coming home!

The pioneer days, I would venture to say, ended with World War I, and several changes took place which I will mention briefly:

T. B. Holland and Co. took over Hight's store, and McLanes Drug, using both buildings for their store. The old log building which had housed Thompson's store near the river was moved to town and became the news print shop. There were: Hodges Hardware, Shorty McDonald's "Rex Cafe," Teutsch's Meat Market, Kaiser's Hardware, and Cook's Clothing store in the Joy Building.

About this time I remember there had been a large corn crop and many were burning it for fuel. The post

office was moved to the Jim Gray building and A. R. Dendy served as a postmaster for many years; M. L. (Doc) O'Reilley changed Brown's store into a modern drug store with a soda fountain in the front, which was probably the most profitable feature of his business. When school was dismissed in the afternoon the students would flock there to sip the cool sodas or to eat ice cream. At Christmas time he would set out large wooden buckets of hard candy in the front part of the store and young customers filing past would help themselves to a handful of candy.

About 1916 Dad had installed a Delco electric plant which provided the hotel with electricity. Later a similar larger plant was installed near the back of Spears' Store to supply the town's electricity. It was operated by F. W. Schwartz.

In the early spring of 1919 the flu epidemic, which had been spreading over the country, reached White River. One after another of the people were coming down with it and when isolation of the patients became necessary every available building was turned into a temporary hospital. The Congregational Church and the Masonic Hall (above O'Reilley's drug store) were crowded with beds and all who were willing and able were nursing the sick. Dr. Hannah Schmitters, who had come the year before to set up a practice, was putting in some pretty long hours walking from house to house ministering to the patients. Mom had nursed several of Dr. Schmitters' patients who lived at the hotel, and it was natural for her to continue when the flu epidemic struck. So many of the students, including myself, came down with the flu. The school was closed and filled with beds for the sick. Miss Mathilda Tarleton, having had training as a nurse, helped my mother. I remember her sitting by my bed through the long nights giving me medicine and other care. There were occasional visits from Dr. Schmitters and I was told that Gladys Eaton and Mrs. Richards were very ill. The first day I was able to be up, a sunny April day, they told me Mrs. Richards had died and her funeral was being held that day. Her death was a great loss to the community and to us Camp-fire Girls who had found her a wonderful guardian.

It was about this time that Dr. Bouza came to White River from Tyndall. His office was in a building across the street from Breier's garage and next to Ernie McLean's Barber Shop. Dr. Still came a little later.

About 1919 a resident priest, Father Halpin, came to organize a Catholic parish. He traveled many miles, often on horseback, to visit the country people. For some time mass was said in the dining room of our hotel. While the church was being built, Father O'Reilley came and then Father Crede in 1921. It was during Father Crede's pastorate that the parish purchased the D. L. McLean house to be used as a rectory. In 1922 Father Walsh took over the duties of the parish.

There was a new Congregational minister also named Rev. Richards. The Richards' had a young daughter, Mary. Many probably remember seeing her riding around town on her pony with her small dog sitting behind the saddle.

Because of the increase in the number of students the year I was a sophomore (1919), it became necessary to furnish the north room upstairs, which had been used as a gymnasium, for a grammar room (seventh and eighth grades). Some of the new students entering about this time were Francis Baker, Helen Eveleth, Russell and George Keller, Mary and Nell Clevenger, Jack Strain,



Mabel Scull, Katherine Crockett, Lucetta Smith, Juanita Allcott, Gladys Dean, Irene Hale, and Granville Crockett. Miss Tarleton was the teacher for my first two years in high school. Teachers in the lower grades were Flora Freseman, grammar room; Irene Swanson, intermediate; and Mary Williams, primary. The next two years we had Mr. A. E. Sullivan who was assisted the first year by Miss Mayme Miller. Besides teaching the grammar grades, she taught high school English. The second year Mrs. George Bonita assisted in the high school. New students were Georgia Atkinson, Daisy Briggs, Hallie Funk, Gerald Barton, Ted Hollenbeck, Vera Van Schaack and Virgil Van Schaack.

The years spent in high school were happy ones. The trips to near-by towns competing in track meets and baseball games were always a lot of fun. I'd often drive Dad's Model-T Ford to take a load of players to Murdo or Wood for the games. On one of these trips to Murdo, Miss Tarleton and Miss Williams went with us. When we were about twelve miles out of White River we blew out a tire.

We stopped at a gate where a side road led to the farm-house on the Stromer place where the C. H. Van-Schaack family had recently moved from Van Meter, Iowa. In the family there were Charles and Hattie and their four boys, Clair, Ray, Ralph and Virgil. C. H., who was a nephew of Jim Gray, drove the county road grader for some time and was appointed County Highway Superintendent; soon after they moved into White River. Clair was out in the yard hitching a team to a wagon, and realizing our plight, came out to help change the tire. He recognized the teachers, having met them a few months earlier at the New Year's dance in White River. They chatted while he fixed the tire. He and I scarcely noticed each other.

Other activities were school dances, plays—so much fun at rehearsals—and traveling to other towns to put them on; glee club concerts given at the M.E. Church, since we had no auditorium; we enjoyed them all. Ours,

the class of 1922, was the first high school graduating class and included Georgia Atkinson, George Keller, Andrew Smith, Katherine Crockett and myself. During my last year in high school I worked as a part-time relief operator for Mrs. Allie Perry who was then operator-manager of the telephone office. After graduating, I worked there full time and later replaced Mrs. Perry when she resigned.

I received some notes from my brother, Clem, which have helped to round out my story. I believe a good way to end would be to include part of his letter which accompanied his notes.

"Somehow, the more you live and the older you become, the more you seem to be inclined to recede into an era of memories. We've heard so many things about the 'good old days,' I wonder how many of us are aware of how happy we were; we may have suffered many privations and embarrassment, but in the long run we were very fortunate. The entire lot of us were endowed with an unquenchable desire to 'go places,' a will to survive, self reliance, personal confidence, ingenuity and the gift of personal application and adjustment which at the time seemed as though they were prerequisites of life itself.

"You know, I've decided you are going to write OUR story—I'll help. After all, a person must respect seniority and so you are chosen. I'm sending my memoirs.

"There are so many things that go to make up a land, but the major characteristic is the people, and we had them all. In fact, we had everything. Whatever the hardships and the privations, one doesn't remember too well the evil things that were, but tends to dwell on the pleasant, the happy moments; not the drought but May-days when the plum blossoms were in full bloom, the green pastures and long lazy evenings. A person can live a long time in a letter; this one is now fifty years old! I think everyone gets a little foolishly sentimental about these things, but after all, when you've lived a half century through the things we have, 'you should have privileges!'"

## One Version of How Norris Got Its Name

By John Weich

The name Norris, was the name of our first son. He was born January 26, 1909. He would be 52 years of age if he was living now. But we lost him January 26, 1920. He was then eleven years of age and he died from a brain tumor in the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minn. Well, that was the end of our Norris boy, but not his name. His namesake, the town of Norris, S. D., is still alive and very much so. The name Norris was given to the store and post office by his aunt, Miss Margaret Congar, for herself and our boy.

Mr. Putnam had built a new store. Miss Congar was employed by the Putnams as a clerk in the new store. Upon the completion, Mr. Putnam told the family one evening that the store building was now all complete but for one thing. Someone asked, "What is that?" And his answer was, "A name for the store." Miss Congar saw her opportunity and said, "I will give it a name."

And he said, "Okay, what shall it be?" She said, "Call it Norris."

Mr. Putnam said, "Okay, Norris it is."

Miss Margaret Congar, that I have mentioned, is my sister-in-law. Years before this incident at Norris, she

was employed at the Rosebud Hotel when managed by Mr. and Mrs. Rassmussen Anderson. This was during the period when Mr. Kelley was the Indian Agent of the Agency there at Rosebud, South Dakota. I was a regular boarder there at the hotel as I was at that time a mail carrier from Valentine, Nebr., to the Rosebud Agency. I held that job for two years, 1904 and 1905.

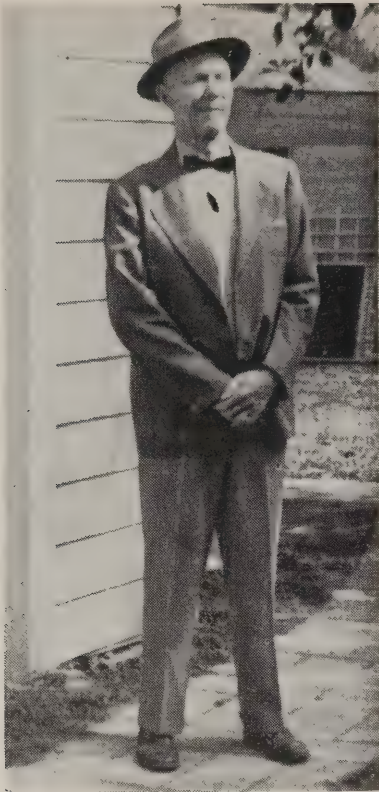
Rosebud Agency Superintendent Kelley appointed Mr. Putnam as a Boss Farmer. Mr. Putnam also made his home in the Rosebud Hotel and of course that is how we all got acquainted. That is also how he came to hire Margaret Congar when he was looking for a responsible store clerk.

When Mr. Putnam's wife and two small sons came, they left the hotel and moved out to where his work as a Boss Farmer was. And after that he went into the mercantile business at Norris.

When I was carrying the mail from the Rosebud Agency in South Dakota to Valentine, Nebr., there were no automobiles out here.

I was young and strong then, about the age of 22 or 23. I shall never forget some of these winter trips, across that long, bleak prairie in blizzards. There was nothing





John Weich

visible except tall telephone post lines. I had to follow them as the roads were out of sight.

Many years ago I read one of J. C. Penney's stories where he mentioned, "Don't be a job hunter, but make yourself a job." Well, I did just that. I gathered up a few pieces of automobile items, loaded them into a second-hand Chevie I was driving and hit the road. I developed into a full fledged wholesale automobile parts distributor. On this route I traveled 18 years.

On this certain occasion I was selling in Belvidere, S. D. I had just finished calling on my dealers and parked at the curb when a stranger drove up and parked beside me. I noticed his car plates, which read Oregon. So I thought this man and I sure don't live in the same state, and I said to him, "Apparently you are from Oregon."

He replied, "Yes, but I still have a warm spot in my heart for South Dakota."

That made me curious and I asked him, "How come?" "Well," he said, "I grew up in South Dakota from a small boy." That made me more curious and I asked him again, "Where, and what was the name of the place?" And he answered my son's name, "Norris," and that his father once operated a store there.

Well, if anyone ever saw a surprised look on a man's face it was I, then. When I finally gathered my wits, I said, "Your father built the store, and they called it Norris, and your father's name is Putnam." He was the surprised one then. He had only been a small boy when the store was built. I asked him how it happened that the store was called Norris. And he said, "We had a lady working for us by the name of Miss Margaret Congar and she named the store Norris." I asked him if he knew why she named it Norris and he couldn't remember. So I told him she named it after her nephew who was my son and herself!

Margaret is now Mrs. Robert McCormick, Valentine, Nebr.

Mr. Putnam told me that he had a warm spot in his heart for this part of South Dakota for a special reason and this is the story he told me.

When his dad first went to Rosebud and accepted the position as a Boss Farmer, it left Mrs. Putnam and their two small boys alone. Suddenly he (the boy) took sick with pneumonia and was taken to the hospital very ill. His mother stayed with him; soon his aunt came to help care for him. Later his dad was called and things didn't look good for the boy. His dad was taking the night shift in tending for him. One night about the hour of midnight, the boy said to his father, "Dad, I am hungry. I wish I could have some pancakes." Mr. Putnam looked at his sick son in surprise and said, "Why son, pancakes would kill you."

But the boy said, "I would rather die that way than starve." His dad tried to convince him that he was not going to die anyway. But the boy said, "Yes, I know. First my aunt came and then you came."

After a while he asked his worried dad for the pancakes. So his dad said for him not to tell his mother and he would go downstairs and see if he could get the cook to fix up some cakes. He came back with a plate of steaming hot cakes and the boy ate them. In less than an hour or so he could just feel the strength coming into his arms and legs.

The next morning when the doctor came through and looked at the chart hanging on the patient's bed and saw the words, "no refreshments," he walked away, shaking his head and saying, "It's too bad."

The next night as midnight came along the boy again said to his dad, "The cakes last night didn't kill me, and I feel a little better, so I want cakes and eggs tonight." He got them and he ate them and he kept right on gaining. So with the son apparently on the way to recovery, the dad decided it was now safe for him to go back to his job on the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Then the determined son said, "If you are going, I am going, too." The father stayed a few days longer and then Mr. Putnam told me, "They rolled me up in blankets and that is the way I came to South Dakota. And the sunshine in South Dakota did the rest." This once sickly little boy was now in Belvidere, a large robust man with all the expression of health that anyone could have. So I thought like he did, that South Dakota did pretty well for him.



"Norris" Weich, standing beside Grandpa Congar who has Ethel on his lap.



### Pioneer Freighter of the Early Days

This story concerns a man by the name of Jake Martin, who did freighting into the Indian Reservations to the Indian Traders.

This particular trip, as he was moving north with his cargo of freight, he met some Indians who were heading south to Valentine, Nebr.

When they met this old-time, rugged freighter, they stopped to visit with him. They asked him if he could use a nice piece of beef. He thought it was a nice looking piece of meat, and the weather being late fall, he figured it would keep. It would help out his ration box to have a good piece of beef added for the long journey. So he paid the Indians and got the meat.

And they all moved on, each in their separate directions. Before he had traveled too many miles, he saw there ahead of him what seemed to be a dead horse lying near the road. When he was about even with it he gave it a good look. And now he could see there was a hole cut out of the horse exactly the size and shape of the piece of meat he had bought from the Indians. He immediately gave his new piece of meat a sling out of the wagon and left it for the crows. Somehow he had lost his appetite for his (?) beef.

In later years, Mr. Martin located on a piece of land north of Valentine on what was called the North Table. He resided there the rest of his days. His buildings were located on the west side of what was known as the Valentine to Rosebud trail. I carried the mail on this trail 59 years ago.

### The Big Blizzard of 1888

I was at that time a boy at the age of seven years. It was my first winter in a country school. Our schoolhouse was called the Wittenburg School. It was located approximately 15 miles north of Scotland, S. D. We had a lady teacher.

The morning previous to the storm, it was calm and quiet. Hardly any breeze stirring all day, until the storm hit at about 3:30 p.m. Then everything turned dark outside and inside. All visibility was gone outdoors. With that raging storm, the schoolhouse would at times shake. The whistling wind would seem to hit and move on and hit again. It almost seemed like we were in a tornado.

The snow would blow and drift through the tiniest holes and pile up in big drifts on the inside. Then to our amazement a door opened and in came a person. He seemed like a bundle packed solid with snow. He was about exhausted and out of breath. He began to remove the snow and running water from his face and eyes so he could again see and breathe. When he removed his outer coat, it seemed that there was as much snow under his coat as on the outside. His first words were to our teacher and these were his words: "Don't let one of these children outside!"

All we could hear outside was the howling wind and we could feel it shaking the schoolhouse. We put in a gruesome evening and night. No supper and no beds to sleep on. The floor was entirely too cold to lie on. We tried to set in our seats and lean over, putting our heads on our desks to rest. Occasionally, in this uncomfortable position, we would have a few short naps. By and by the long night ended and there came a little break of daylight in the east as the storm let up and another day dawned.

Before long, the parents began showing up at the schoolhouse to find out how their children were.

Don't think they didn't thank the good Lord to find their children alive and unblemished from any freezing. Then we began to start out for our homes. I had walked across that prairie many, many times, back and forth to school from my home, but this morning I would have been completely lost without my parent for a guide. Nothing looked natural; I felt like I was in a strange land. If you ever were on a large lake on a windy day or on the ocean where you could see the huge waves rolling, you can have an idea about the way the whole countryside appeared. As far as the eye could see, all that could be seen were waves of these huge white snow-drifts. I could not recognize any of the neighbor's homes or our own, as many of the drifts were higher than the buildings. Some smaller buildings, fences and other land marks were entirely covered.

When we walked into our home yard, my mother came running out. She shed tears of joy, she was so happy that her son was safe.

Then started the big and sad task of finding the lost ones. Very few of the people and stock that were out in the storm overnight had survived. There were many broken homes and broken hearts from loss of relatives.

One couple had three sons in school (not at our schoolhouse). The oldest, possibly 16, the next oldest about 14 and a younger brother. These boys had ventured out in the storm, trying to go home from school. When they were found, the oldest brother evidently was helping the little boy and they went down together. There they both lay, frozen dead with the arms of the older brother still around the youngest boy. The other brother was also found frozen a little farther on. And that was the sad end of all of the boys in that family.

Some of the livestock had their entire heads so covered with snow and ice they couldn't see. Some turned mad and would run in the direction of any sounds. As soon as the ice was removed from their heads, they seemed to calm down. Many of them had frozen feet and legs and even their eyeballs were frozen from the exposure.

One bunch of cattle had been put into a shed for shelter over the stormy night. This shed had a straw and hay roof. The storm hit, and the wind had blown so much snow into the shed, and the stock had been tromping around all night to keep warm. The next morning several had their heads sticking through the roof.

I have told you a little of the story about the blizzard of 1888. But this would hardly make a scratch on the pages that could be written about that horrible historical event.

### A Runaway Ox Team

This incident happened away back in 1885. I was then four years of age. We were living on a place a short distance north of Scotland, S. D.

My dad was working for a neighbor in the hay field at fifty cents per day. I suppose that was the going wages those days.

We had a team of oxen and a wagon. The name of the team was Jim and Frank.

The time I am telling about, my mother with my baby sister and myself had just taken my dad over to the neighbors to work. She was driving the ox team. On our return home, the road passed along the side of a lake with tall slough-grass at the water's edge. Suddenly a large Shikpoke flew up, flapping his wings. That



scared our team of oxen and away they ran down the road lickety split.

Well, next the wagon tongue slipped out of the big ring on the ox yoke and hit the ground, the force driving it into the ground. The oxen broke the chain, or whatever they were hitched to the wagon with, and away they went down the road. My mother was running after them for all she was worth, calling to the oxen, "Whoa, Jim, Whoa Frank, Whoa Jim, Whoa Frank!"

Pretty soon the oxen stopped and went to grazing. They were gentle, so mother led them back to the wagon. I was still sitting in the wagon, half scared to death, holding onto my little baby sister.

Upon mother's return, we both tried to push the wagon backwards so as to get the wagon tongue out of the dirt. But no luck; we couldn't budge it. Finally mother had the bright idea of hitching the oxen to the back of the wagon and have them pull the tongue out of the ground. So that is what she did.

When that wagon tongue popped out of the ground, the wagon gave a lurch and hit the oxen on their rears. And that scared them and away they ran again. They broke loose from mother and made a circle, around and around, on the prairie, pulling the wagon backwards with the tongue dragging. My baby sister and I were still riding in the wagon. And don't think that didn't scare me. Sissie and I really whooped it up! Mother was running again as fast as she could go, and again calling: "Whoa Jim, Whoa Frank, Whoa Jim, Whoa Frank." Finally the oxen quit running and settled down to grazing on a nice spot of green grass. Mother asked me if I was afraid. I told her I sure didn't like to ride backwards.

I don't remember if I ever took any more ox rides. In fact, I can't remember if I ever saw those oxen again. It is a long time back to those days in 1885. But I guess the runaway oxen scared me so much it left an imprint on my memory that has stayed with me to this day.

## Mellette County In 1911

By James Wilder

I arrived in White River in August 1911. I helped start the Independent Lumber Yard owned by Keith & Edwards of Philip, South Dakota.

We had ten wagon-loads of lumber freighted down from Philip. They crossed the Big White River near Stamford. All our material had to be freighted in. We had a small yard at Farley a couple years later.

I remember a lot about the early days at White River. I married Miss Mary E. Coyle, August 20, 1913, in the Indian Catholic Church. It was on top of the hill across the river at that time. She homesteaded a mile west of the church and later my brother, William Wilder, homesteaded the adjoining quarter section.

We lived on the homestead and then later moved the house down to the river, by a fording place, near the Indian Presbyterian Church. I had homesteaded in Pen-



Election day in White River. Mrs. D. L. McLane at table.

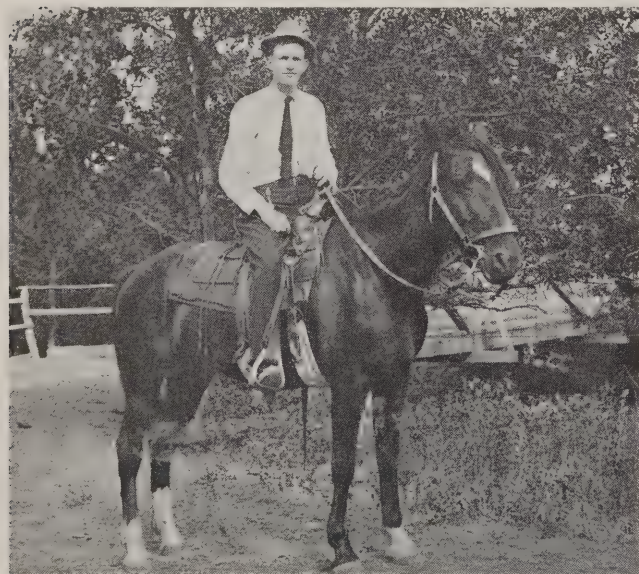
nington County thirty-five miles northwest of Philip before coming to White River.

Mrs. Wilder was the primary teacher before a two-story schoolhouse was built in the eastern part of town. She first taught in a building on main street and then in the larger school. Miss Nellie McDonald and Dorothy O'Rielley were also early teachers.

I helped build the White River Power Dam and a lot of the early roads in the White River area.

I helped organize what we called Inter-Rosebud League for schools. We held track and field meets. Some of the places were at Witten, Carter, Ideal, Wood and White River.

I also helped put on the early rodeos, when we held them east of town, and then later west of White River in the new fairgrounds. In the summers of 1912, '13 and '14 the Indians would want to train their horses to run at the fairs and celebrations. So we would have what we called "Tobacco Races" on the race track east of the old school. Every other Saturday around a thousand Indians would come to town for this event. The merchants would donate about five dollars worth of tobacco as prizes and the Indians would have a dozen horse races. This was a big drawing card for business and this was the beginning of the rodeos in White River.



James Wilder on the saddle horse on which he came to White River in 1911 (Taken in 1913).



# White River Scenes, 1911 and 1912



Frontier Days, White River



Election Day, 1912, in White River



Miss Ruhl and pupils — school held on Main Street.  
White River



Pine Creek School. Mountains, Kellers and others.



Frontier Days, White River







1911 view from hills west of Little White River. Dance Hall at left of center, Issue Station and Day School in center. Browns Store was part way up hill to left and tents on flat (left top) became White River town.

Tom Berry and his brothers were arena directors of the shows in the 1920's. But we had big rodeos before that. We had the Scotty Phillips string of bucking horses from Fort Pierre. Adam Marshall, Cooper Brothers, Doug Walker and Earl Thode were some of our riders who became nationally known later on.

The real old-timers are almost all gone. I was twenty-three when I came to White River with a saddle horse and a dog. We lived on a ranch until 1927.

We have raised nine children. Elizabeth Hubbell has four children and is a registered nurse. Alice died in Nisland in 1929. James Wilder, Jr., has seven children and lives at Hot Springs. He was at Norris for eight

years. Bernard Wilder has three children and is a druggist at Des Moines, Iowa. John has three children and is a chemist in Texas with Eastman. Charles is in Pennsylvania with General Electric. Mrs. Theresa Ryan, R.N., has seven children and lives in Omaha. Robert Wilder died in the Philippines while serving in the Navy. Our youngest son, William Wilder, has three children and is a pharmacist in the "City of Hope," Medical Reserve Hospital, Los Angeles.

We have thirty-four grandchildren living, and we hope to come to White River to the celebration.

(Mary Coyle Wilder passed away since this was written by Mr. Wilder. Our sympathy to the family. W. R.)

## Things I Remember About Mellette County

THE THINGS I REMEMBER About Mellette County  
By Mrs. Lois Curry Wilson

You spoke of having things written down and put in a book before the memories are lost. How many people, I wonder, do really recall the time when you could open the kitchen door almost any fall morning and shoot grouse if you wanted some for supper? Or how thick the prairie chickens were? Or how when a deer, or other scarce animal, would wander down from the Black Hills, all the big boys would skip school, spending the day trying to see it, down by the Big White? Do you suppose they remember also how many buffalo-berry thickets there were? How contemptuous we were at those few who were in too much of a hurry to lay down sheets and shake the berries off, but would instead break off great, fruit-laden limbs and take them home? Are there still so many wild rose thickets, especially along the river?

And how long has it been since large bands of horses wandered about, owned but uncared for? Often we would get permission to break one of them just for the use of it, for the season's work. Some of these horses would be from five to nine years of age and a few of the names we gave them reflect their personalities. There were Fracas, Dynamite, Four Heels, Angel (ought to have been Devil), and others. Swift Crockery was an old sorrel mare that was very hard to break. She used to go over backward until one unlucky day, in mid-winter, as she was being led to water, she went over backward and knocked herself out on the ice.

What Dakota child ever forgets the family saddle horses? One of ours was Sparky, the meanest horse ever invented, and undoubtedly the only animal who could have survived under our care. One of his pet tricks was to let us get to the middle of the horse pasture, then thunder after us with his mouth open. I still bear two large scars across my back where he picked me up and shook me when I leaned over to get his grain box. He was so mean the other kids would not let us keep him with the other horses in the barn at school. Consequently, he stood out in the cold all day and then ran all the way home with a stiff-legged lope at night. He could get out of, or into, anything. And on the coldest week of the year he always went so pitifully lame we would turn him out, only to see his heels kick up in the air as he took off at a speed no other horse could match. With a rider on him, he exhibited no such speed. Then there was Old Pet that we children were never allowed to ride, nor Wanblee either. There was Old Sorrel we all remember. A more willing horse never lived. With Leola, Dad or I, he took off at high speed. Mama was very insulted that with her on his back he walked as slowly and carefully as he did with the smaller children.

Other things I remember the most vividly about Dakota are: Just before we moved to my Dad's Great-Uncle's place, the old Bailey place in the Cody School District, there had just been a severe anthrax epidemic. The prairies everywhere were dotted with heaps of ashes where dead cattle had been piled and burned in an effort to prevent the spread of the disease.



lived Mr. and Mrs. Kimball, Raymond, Henry, James, Francis and Elinor.

Near our place also were Van and Helen Strait, Marjorie and James—I had my first pop corn there. Roy and Lucille Waggoner, Crystal, Kenneth and Marie—Mrs. Waggoner fixed the first jello I ever saw. Gillilands (later Hemmingways lived there). Morans, Zickricks, Ed Hellicksons (later Dimonds), and on the river, Martin Johnson, Henry Schervem and Andersons. Larsons we knew of only because Dad bought our beloved old sorrel horse from them.

Between us and Westover were Charles Ray, Allards, Charles Swift and Bob Jones.

When I was in the second or third grade, the practice of vaccinating school children was begun. Doctor Bouza came out from White River to the Paleck Schoolhouse. We lived some six and a half or seven and a half miles from there, but one morning the folks put Leola (7) and me (8) on old Spark Plug and sent us to the Paleck Schoolhouse to be shot. I cried every step of the way, wondering which of my crimes merited shooting and why the folks didn't want us anymore. But it didn't occur to either of us to disobey or question their orders. When we walked into the schoolhouse, there lay Gladys Paleck on the recitation bench, white as a sheet, and I nearly bolted. She looked dead alright, but had only fainted. I was so glad to see only a needle instead of a gun, I don't believe I offered any objections to my first "shot."

I remember Sunday School with Reverend Jans as the preacher. They came in a buggy with a child always on the horse, with their feet resting on the shafts. No one seemed too certain of the singing one time. My mother was supposed to be leading it, but for some reason couldn't get it started right. My dad, who claimed he couldn't sing, ordinarily, was squatted on his heels by the door with the rest of the men. Very calmly he finally launched into "The Great Physician" and led it with the greatest nonchalance.

Another sight I'll always remember is the Leusman twins with their very long, heavy, blond braids.

Mr. Bronson (Charlie, I think) lived near the Westover Indian Church and maintained the roads. Mrs. Bronson, it seems to me, was a semi-invalid. She always seemed to have peanut butter on hand—I can't recall that anyone else did—so we kids used to manage to find ourselves both hungry and thirsty when we got there on our way back from the mail box!

We rode 4½ miles to the White River-Murdo highway for our mail. Since I was, at first, four and one-half and Leola three, my mother was quite reluctant to see us go, but we felt quite capable. Leola had to get off and pile dirt or rocks up until she could stand on them and reach the mail box. Then she'd hand the flour sack containing the mail to me. I'd tie it on the saddle, then reach down and pull her up by the hand and she'd walk up Sparky's side until she was back of the saddle again. I couldn't get off because I couldn't reach the stirrups (we rode a wooden army saddle) and I was also too heavy for her to help up. Sparky would never, or so it seemed, get up close enough to the box for us to just reach in and get the mail. Later when I was alone and had to get off, I learned to let him put his head down to eat, get on his neck facing the saddle, kick him under the chin, and slide down to reach the saddle when he threw his head up!

Those are some of my recollections of when I lived in Mellette County.



**Grouse, Eating Corn in  
Mellette County**

Another sight I recall quite clearly was the huge herds of horses owned, if my recollections are correct, by Kendalls. They lived in a house with REAL upstairs on the Little White River road towards the Westover Bridge. They trailed the horses to a spring pasture past our place.

About two years later we moved to a half section of land leased from Jim Yellow Eagle. It seems to me he looked the same then as he did when I saw him in White River in July 1959, and this was about 1924 or so. This land had never been lived on and the rattlesnakes were so numerous that my sister and I, that first summer, were allowed to play only on the top of the barn which had a boxcar type roof. At the end of the summer we had a quart fruit jar full, and were well on the way to having another pint, of rattles. I believe that was about the only crop we realized that year, as hail struck.

It was here, too, in April of either 1926 or 1927, that Leola and I went out in the snow over knee-deep to a saddle horse and helped bring in new calves. Sometimes we had one in front of the saddle, one in the saddle with us, and one tied on the back.

Then came the drouth years and our income one winter, and means of buying seed the next spring, was derived from coyote hides and bounties. It was possible, I recall, to ride from this place, some twenty-four miles northeast of White River, to the Kary place by Norris without crossing a fence. My father hunted in this territory but not often as far as Norris.

Neighbors of ours by the Bailey place were: Daugherty's, who had lots of boys. Bob and Laura Owens and later their children, Viola and Eileen, I believe. Mr. and Mrs. Chris Wolf and their children who were yet at home, Bill, Clifford, Rose, Emma and Leona. Jack Steiners and their children, Richard, Wallace, Charles, Doris, Harold (now my brother-in-law), and Lily. Thompsons (she had been Gertrude Wolf). Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Emmett, Melvin, Emily (Mrs. Ed Lunn), Thelma, Wanda, and I don't recall any others. I do recall an oyster supper and card party at the Paleck Schoolhouse where we all stood on the porch, horrified, and watched the Wilson house burn a couple miles away. Mr. and Mrs. Paleck and four children. Mr. and Mrs. Buffington and their family; I recall only Robert and Florence. Doc Rake, where Sumners later lived. It was here I heard my first radio. Later I heard one at Steiners', where I heard someone singing through ear-phones. Also in this area



# Albert Kirk Wood

By Virginia Kirk Wood

Albert Kirk Wood, "A. K." to all who knew him, and that was just about everyone throughout Mellette County, had great dreams for the future of the area, which were cut short by his untimely death, February 25, 1914, at the age of 36.

The Indians affectionately called him Hogongalishka (I'm very much in doubt about that spelling), meaning spotted fish.

Albert Wood was born February 4, 1878, in St. Louis, Mo., son of Laura Virginia Coons and William Albert Wood. After his father's death (when he was only 6), he, his mother and brother divided their time between Omaha, Nebr., and Culpeper, Va.

As a young man, he was associated with the Paxton and Gallagher Company in Omaha. But his pioneering spirit led him to South Dakota where he became a licensed Indian trader at Butte Creek for a period. He sold out his store and leased a ranch near Yankton where he brought his bride, a boyhood sweetheart, Jeannie Gray Miller of Culpeper, Va., whom he married April 6, 1904.

Fire terminated the stay in Yankton at the end of the year. It happened during a visit of Mrs. Wood to her home in Culpeper, Va. A. K. had been on an ill-fated trip to Omaha with a shipment of cattle. The cattle had lost weight enroute and upon arriving in Omaha he found that prices had dropped. He returned to Yankton to find their home burned to the ground. Looking at the ruins, he tossed the now useless front door key into a pool of melted cut glass and silver, the couple's wedding presents.

He was broke. He borrowed money to make the trip to Culpeper to see his wife and three-weeks old baby daughter, Mary Gray. He told Mrs. Wood, "I will have to begin all over again and I can't ask you to go through those hardships again. Stay here where you'll be comfortable until I get started."

But with the same spirit she has shown all through her life, Mrs. Wood packed baby and diapers and followed him west.

This time they went to the Rosebud where he began the work that finally led to the founding of the town of Wood, named in his honor.

He was instrumental in building many of the buildings in Wood and conducted the Wood Mercantile store with a branch in O'Kreek for several years.

In 1912 Albert Wood was one of the moving spirits that conceived the idea of platting the town of Wood and



A. K. Wood residence south of Wood, 1910-11

the Wood Townsite Company was organized and incorporated. He was also one of the moving spirits to get Mellette County organized and opened for settlement.

During his sixteen years residence in the area he acquired considerable land. And his Cross A ranch abutted the edge of town. He was a great lover of animals, raising horses and selling them to the government. His stable had its front door in Wood and the back door opened on the plains of the ranch north of town.

A. K. experimented agriculturally for the government. Though he and his family (his wife and two daughters) lived a half mile south of the town at first. (An Indian school for girls was later in our house.)

He had such big dreams for the future of this part of the country. It was his whole life. And, in fact, he gave his life for it. He was on the first board of County Commissioners. During the last election before his death he campaigned for Wood to be made the county seat, a campaign which you might say cost him his life. He spent some time in Silver City, New Mexico, in the Sanitarium and had been pronounced cured of tuberculosis and warned to take it easy. Instead, he went into a strenuous campaign. In all, he was ill 6 years—1908-1914.

He could have returned to Wood to spend the last few months with his family, but he chose to sacrifice that pleasure and remain in New Mexico rather than expose them to his illness.

He wanted to do so much. His dreams were big, as were his hopes and plans for the future of this country, but his health wouldn't permit it.

Looking back, Mrs. Wood remembers they were very happy in the early years before his health broke. The



Early View of Wood, S. D.



life was hard for a girl from the east, but she was young and she had her family.

She liked the friendliness of the area, people dropping in for meals. In fact, it was nothing unusual to find a note on the kitchen table in the morning saying "Thank you for the breakfast, we were passing through." Travelers knew they were welcome, so had stopped to help themselves. She liked the Indians, too. She was the only white woman on the reservation and when she brought Mary Gray home, a little baby girl with golden curls, the Indians were fascinated. She was a great curiosity. Many a time Mrs. Wood would be working in the kitchen and have the feeling that someone was watching. Only to realize that it was a squaw with her nose pressed to the window pane. She would take Mary Gray out for them to see and touch, as if she were a doll. They wanted advice for their own babies and Mother's favorite prescription was "castor oil."



**Sioux Indian Parade, Wood, S. D., 1910**

Mary Gray remembers they had a celebration for her and in a ceremony under a big bower of twigs gave her an Indian name, "Winchinchilla" (spelling is doubtful, meaning daughter or girl, woman with plenty of horses (I think).

Another ceremony she remembers was the exchange of a beaded dress made especially for her, for one of A. K.'s horses. A. K. was one of the first to have a threshing machine. Also one of the first to have a car, a grey "Rambler" (not related to the present Nash) which was the only car that could take the dirt wagon roads with the high centers.

His dream of a railroad terminus in Wood was not realized until 1929, 15 years after his death. Winner was the terminus prior to that time. The Wood Townsite Company granted the land for the rights of way and the station and it was planned that in early October of 1929, Mrs. Wood would ride in on the first train to cross the prairie into Wood. The Indians had planned a fake abduction of her. But all good plans of mice and men . . . These plans were disrupted by not only the Wall Street crash, but an untimely blizzard which held Mrs. Wood, and the first train, in Winner for two weeks!

Many southerners and easterners joined A. K. and his wife in the development of the area. Among them, Mrs. Wood's two brothers, Dabney Gray Miller and Robert R. Miller (he lived in Carter and ran a hardware store), and their wives. (Robt. Miller, his wife and one son have all died. He was living in Cincinnati as district sales manager for Minnesota, Mining and Manufacturing Company at the time of his death May 30, 1950.)

Mrs. Wood's mother and stepfather, Mr. and Mrs.

Wm. H. Gilkeson, also lived in Carter. They came west from Culpeper. Mrs. Gilkeson died in 1916.

Others from the east were Robert P. Carter from Baltimore, who came to Wood and became postmaster. He died out there; I don't know the date. Frank A. Brown from Piqua, Ohio, was helping daddy for quite a while. The last I heard of him he lived in Dayton, Ohio.

Mrs. Jeannie Gray Wood (Mrs. A. K.) is living with her daughter, Virginia, in Toledo, Ohio. Mary Gray, Mrs. William Haynes, lives in Fremont, Ohio, 30 miles south of Toledo, and has a daughter, Caroline (Mrs. George Enslin) and a son, William Wood Haynes. She has two grandchildren (A. K.'s and J. G.'s great grandchildren) all of whom have been delighted again and again with the many colorful stories relating the early experiences of A. K. and Jeannie Gray on the "Rosebud."

Daddy was very active in the masonry in Wood and became a 32nd degree mason before his death.

Mary Gray was 9, and Virginia 6, at the time of their father's death.

Following are some of the things I remember of those six years on the Rosebud.

I remember prairie fires—caused by electric storms—the frightening experience of an electrical storm on the prairie. Lightning that whipped across the plains and hit the first thing in its path . . . and the fires that burned all in their way.

I remember, too, the dust storms . . . the trips from Omaha on the train when you had to bury your face in a pillow to keep from breathing the dust. It took all day to make the trip. Winner was the last stop then. On a trip with Uncle Dabney Miller and my sister, Mary Gray, the train stopped for lunch at Bonesteel. We all got out and went into the restaurant. I was eating ice cream, a very slow eater, and the all-aboard signal came (think it was that big iron ring they hit). Mary Gray said, "Let's hurry." Uncle Dabney said, "Let Virginia finish her ice cream." When we got outside, the train was going down the track. Fortunately, the brakeman was on the rear platform and saw us standing in the middle of the track, waving frantically. They backed the train to let us on. Would that happen today? Shades of the good old days!

Do tumble weeds still roll across the prairie?

I remember old Dick, an Irish setter and friend of all. He belonged to Daddy, but he visited everyone in town—made the rounds every day. They wrote a lengthy obituary for him on his death.

Mother remembers when she and Daddy and Mary Gray (then two years) and a couple of friends (she doesn't



**Robert P. Carter, about 1914, at Wood P.O. Town still on this location.**





**Mr. and Mrs. A. K. Wood and daughters, Mary Gray and Virginia. Town of Wood named for A. K.**

remember who) packed a covered wagon and took a trip to the Black Hills, just for fun. This was 1907. The fore-runner of the modern station wagon.

I remember the coyotes howling on the hill back of our house. And the Indians weeping loudly if there was a death in the family.

I remember the "deep freeze"—the ice house, dug out of the side of a hill. Ice was cut on the ponds in the winter, packed in straw and put in the ice house for use all year round.

I remember Freda Gudath who lived with us and read us the funny papers, which arrived more than a week late. She was German and the only thing she could read was parts of the "Katzenjammer Kids." We laughed loud and long just the same. I remember the great snows of winter that banked to the second story of our house. The wind blew a path around the house. But it was deep enough to cover the trees. Daddy drove the wagons out over it and it lasted all winter. When the spring thaws came, it was nothing to go to school in the morning but not be able to get over the creek (we called it "crick" then) to get home.

We never locked our doors. Never had any keys in the keyhole so that in the winter snow drifted through and made a pyramid of snow on the floor inside.

I remember the big Base Burner in the living room that made a "hot spot" close around it and yet threw such a warm light and flickering shadows throughout the room.

What has happened to Kenneth Mellott? He was the manager of Daddy's ranch.

I remember Mother telling of the 1910 version of a car heater. When they made the trip to White River, they warmed bricks and wrapped them, then put them under their feet. She says Dad often would stop and get out to shoot wolves that came toward the buggy.

\* \* \*

## Mellette County Weather Precipitation Chart

The MELLETTE COUNTY PIONEER  
IDA M. KIRCH, Editor & Publisher

Entered as second class mail matter at Wood, S. D.,  
March 23, 1913, under act of March 3, 1879

### U. S. WEATHER BUREAU REPORT Precipitation Previous Years

1913—18.08	1914—19.83	1915—33.40
1916—19.01	1917—17.11	1918—20.14
1919—20.90	1920—28.24	1921—19.12
1922—24.79	1923—21.17	1924—16.93
1925—10.77	1926—13.81	1927—20.59
1928—12.22	1929—22.07	1930—30.99
1931—14.13	1932—20.69	1933—10.44
1934— 8.73	1935—18.41	1936—12.39
1937—11.25	1938—15.24	1939—19.10
1940—10.76	1941—23.91	1942—22.98
1943—15.22	1944—24.67	1945—14.25
1946—25.74	1947—16.41	1948—19.69
1949—20.44	1950—21.77	1951—27.61

Fred C. Kirch, Observer

1952—16.62	1953—23.52	1954—16.00
1955—18.69	1956—17.61	

Mrs. Fred C. Kirch, Observer

Thursday	70	48	0.14
Friday	74	47	0.00
Saturday	85	54	0.00
Sunday	90	57	0.00
Monday	87	58	0.00
Tuesday	86	49	0.00
Wednesday	98	58	0.00

Total precipitation January 1, 1961, to date,  
10.16 inches. (6-23-1961)

(Chart, courtesy of Mrs. F. C. Kirch, in memory of F. C. Kirch, first official Mellette County weather observer and long-time publisher of The Mellette County Pioneer.)



**Log Indian Dance Hall, Norris  
(Still Standing)**



# White River Wins The County Seat, May 25, 1911

By Winifred Reutter

When the railroad companies built lines toward the west across South Dakota in the early days, a lot of excitement happened along the routes as it progressed.

Little towns sprang up that weren't much more than rows of surveyor's stakes, tents, or quickly constructed frame buildings with high, imposing false fronts. However, in every town, there were land promoters and speculators, all working energetically to get more people to come out West and settle in this "free" country.

Every little townsite stood up on its wobbly little feet, and invited the railroads to come through their location when it steamed across the prairie.

Without the highways and trucks of today, transportation of freight from the outside world to the homesteaders in 1911 depended largely on the railroad. They were favored in every way by special grants and right-of-ways. Many villages boomed or busted due to the decision of the railroad company, whether or not to route their rails through certain towns.

Mellette County did not have a railroad until 1929. But the oldtimers thought the railroad would come out so there were a lot of speculators and townsite companies that did a thriving business setting up townsites where they thought a railroad might eventually come.

Some townsites, like Meyer and Danville—shown on early maps—never developed beyond the platted stage, because the railroad and other businesses failed to locate near them. Others mushroomed overnight—like Chilton, Berkley, Gate City (later called Gateway), and others—but were abandoned a few years later, and now only a few sticks and stones scattered in the grass mark their location.

In Mellette County, the old Indian trails played a great part in the development of certain areas; where the old Indian Issue Stations were located was where the people, Indian and whites alike, congregated. Trails led to these headquarters. Three large Issue Stations were Black Pipe in the western part, White River Issue Station, near the center, and Butte Creek Issue Station in the eastern section.

The Texsam Trail angled through the western area. The Rosebud to Westover road went through the center and the Bad Nation trail was the eastern one. All of these trails went north and south, but not directly. They zigzagged to follow the lay of the land and had many sideroads or sub-trails. They were picked out by the weary travelers who had two objects in mind, the shortest route and the easiest traveling. Often items like watering places or springs were also taken into consideration.

Not having a railroad line to help decide the location of the county seat, the early homesteaders themselves had to choose the location. This they did by means of a general election. This was an important decision for the Mellette County residents and gained all the attention and excitement of any important election. Two towns, Wood and White River, were the chief contenders for the location of the Mellette County courthouse, although there were said to be some votes cast for various little towns. Some of these were like Ogallalla for instance, which never even existed long enough to get on but a few of the early maps. But it did its share in scattering the votes.

On May 25, 1911, the election was held and White River won the county seat and it is still located there. The rights of many voters were contested. One man told me it was the only time his word was ever doubted. He had to verify the length of time he had been in Mellette County before they would let him cast his ballot. It irked some of the citizens when their eligibility to vote was questioned, but they observed that all were checked carefully and could understand why that was a necessary procedure.

When the votes were in, there was still the highly important task of getting these ballot boxes to Pierre to be counted before the officials there and Governor Robert Vessey.

In an election like this, there was always the possibility of ballot box stuffing and other little election tricks. Of course, you and I know, that no one in Mellette County would ever do anything like that, but

it was a general rule to take every precaution against such a possibility.

The Government had appointed a superintendent of elections to go to each county at the time of their county seat elections. His job was to supervise such elections and take charge of the ballot boxes afterwards.

The man appointed for the job in Mellette County was Rev. L. E. Camfield. He was at that time president of Ward Academy. It was for this Academy that the town of Academy was later named. Ward Academy, itself, was named after Joseph Ward, "the builder" and founder of Yankton College.

The story goes that after he got possession of the ballot boxes at White River, he had to walk many weary miles, carrying them, before he located a means of transportation that took him to Murdo, from where he made his way to Pierre.

He performed his duty faithfully and so played a part in White River becoming the county seat of Mellette County.

The information about Rev. Lewis Emerson Camfield's contribution to our Mellette County history was told to us by former Governor M. Q. Sharpe. Mr. Sharpe, himself, served as one of the superintendents of elections during the time that Jackson County held its elections for county seat. Kadoka won there, but Mr. Sharpe told a cute story of one of the side events connected with that election period.



**M. Q. Sharpe**  
Governor of South Dakota  
1943 - 1947

It seems he was traveling west on the train to Weta, to act as election superintendent at the Lone Star school precinct. He remembered about one conductor who certainly could qualify for a position in any diplomatic post.

This conductor announced the stations from east to west as they traveled, as "Stamford, the county seat of Jackson County." Then, "Belvidere, the next county seat of Jackson County." Then, "Kadoka, the next county seat of Jackson County," and so on, all across the county. When he announced the next county seat as Weta, Mr. Sharpe knew where to get off for his assignment.

It was former Governor M. Q. Sharpe who also stated this important fact during his speech to the Jackson County Centennial organization: "In history, dates are important—but the events are more important."



# MELLETTTE COUNTY

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R30W

R31W

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Louise B. Humphrey, White River, member S. D. Centennial Board and State Representative from Melleite County.

FROM MARY LOU LUND  
STATE CENTENNIAL DIRECTOR  
SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# SOUTH DAKOTA'S CITIZENS INTERESTED IN CENTENNIAL YEAR

Many things have been received in the Centennial office during the past few months in regards to this, the Centennial year of Dakota Territory. Of great interest to South Dakotans everywhere is a poem written by Mrs. Winifred Reutter of White River, South Dakota, expressing her feelings about the Centennial year. It is a poem well worth copying and re-reading several times until one is completely familiar with the pattern of 100 years in Dakota Territory and South Dakota.



Mary Lou Lund, Director,  
S. D. Centennial Commission.

## DAKOTA: TERRITORY TO PROSPERITY, 1861-1961

"Once it was only open prairie  
Where Indian and buffalo could roam,  
But from the east the white man came  
With plows and wire, to make his home."

"First government, then homestead fences  
Made barbed wire barricades abound.  
Freighters meandering down buffalo trails  
Had to re-route and go around."

"Emigrant trains slid across tall grass  
On gleaming new steel rails,  
Their shrill steam whistles drowning out  
The meadow lark songs and coyote wails."

"Progress strode across the plains,  
While tentacles of phone and telegraph empires  
Crisscrossed and trapped the midwest land  
In their web of shining wires."

"Now we have two, busy settled States  
With industries, cities, cattle ranches and gold  
The wide new roads and modern homes  
Are the dreams come true of pioneers bold."

Poem written for and donated to S. D. Centennial  
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Kay Nelson, Brookings,  
S. D., author of Centennial Pageant, "Dakota Speaks."



Log House put up in White River for Centennial and Melleite County Anniversary Celebration, Aug. 18, 19, 20, 1961.





# Thanks

Thanks again, to every one of the wonderful people who furnished material or helped in any way to prepare this book. Also to the loyal friends who encouraged me in every way, and to the Lord for His help.

In compiling this book, I was reminded of what the late Bert Hall once said about his book, "Roundup Years." We were having coffee with Bert during the Crop Show at Gregory when a friend came by and I introduced her to: "Bert Hall, the Author." She said,

"Oh, did you write a book?" And Bert drawled, "No, the neighbors did and I signed my name!" And that is the way I feel about this collection of pioneer stories. So, thanks, neighbors, for helping write this, your book.

I know there are errors in this book. Some of the stories conflicted in dates and the spelling of names. I tried to correct the names by checking with old maps, only to find that there, too, spelling and other information varied. I am the sort of person who cannot remember exactly what happened five days ago at five o'clock (can you?), so I think it was remarkable that these people could remember events that happened around fifty years ago, as well as they have. For those who see only the errors, I'll add this rhyme of mine:

## FOR THE CRITICS

Mistakes are made, by the foolish and the wise.

Only he who can do better, has the right to criticize.

This book is not represented as a Mellette County History or textbook. We have only tried to give you a word-picture showing the way of life here, during the homestead days in Mellette County, by collecting the stories from the homesteaders themselves, or their children and friends, and letting them tell their Mellette County Memories in their own way.

A special thanks to my husband, Paul, for his unflinching help in gathering and typing this material. Without his assistance, this book would never have been completed.

WINIFRED REUTTER  
White River, S. Dak.

(No reprint from this book without permission of the author.)



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